

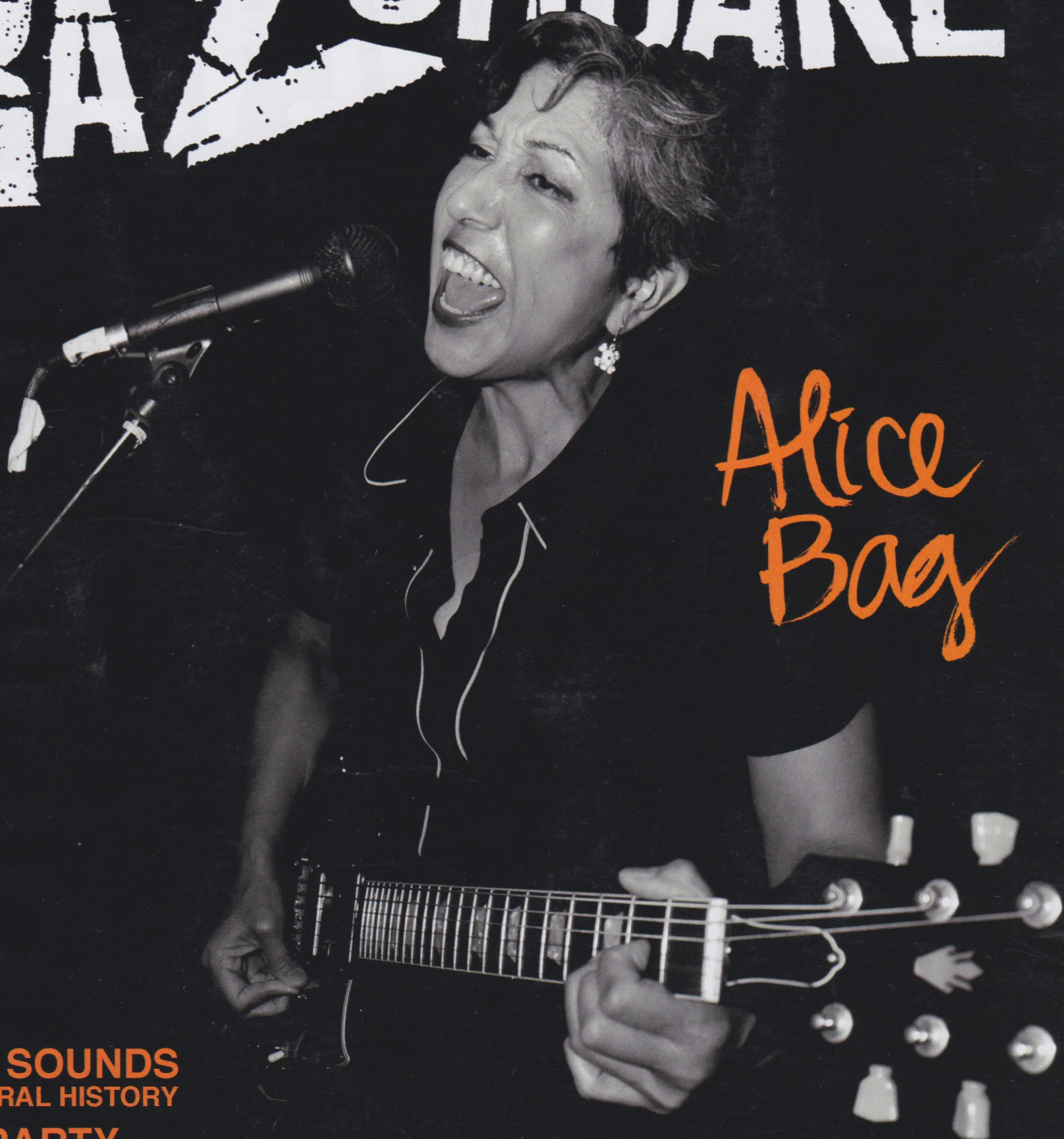


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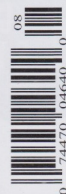
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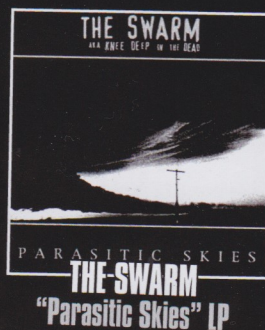
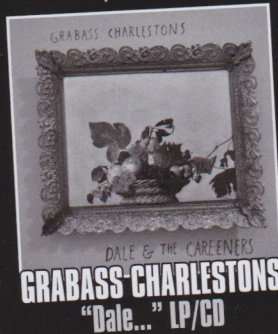
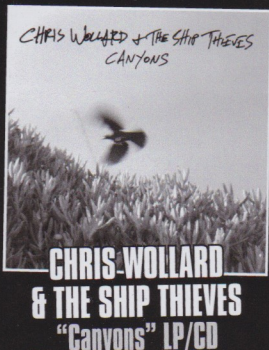
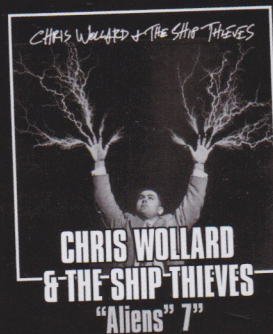
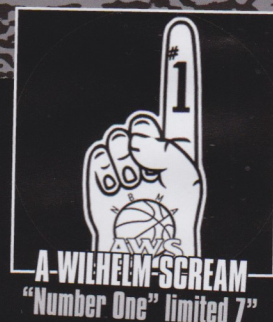
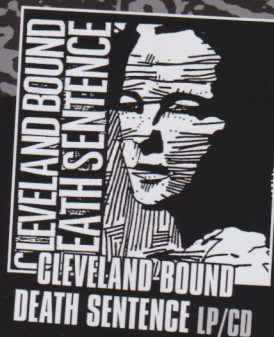
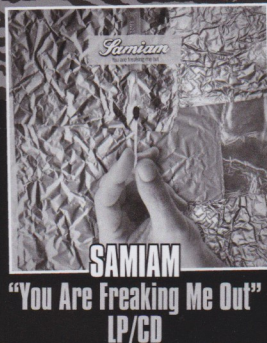
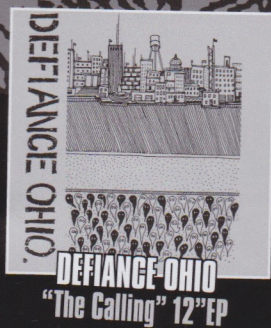
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BY MARCOS SIREF



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MAKE SURE I HAVE A REAL FUN TIME BUT DON'T LET ME GET TOO CRAZY!
THERE WILL BE DANGERS, DEBAUCHERY, AND PERHAPS, JUST PERHAPS A HINT OF... MAGIC?
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YOU DUCK TO THE FRONT OF THE CROWD AND TRY
TO GET TO THE FRONT OF THE CROWD AND TRY
TO GET TO THE FRONT OF THE CROWD AND TRY
TO GET TO THE FRONT OF THE CROWD AND TRY

YOU STAMBLE OVER TO THE SHOW AND FIND
A PARK WITHIN YOU DON'T REALLY RECOGNIZE
ANYONE INSIDE AND THE CURRENT BAND
DOESN'T SOUND TOO APPEALING.

WOW, WEREN'T WE HERE LIKE 14 YEARS
AGO? EXCEPT NOW YOU'RE SHARING YOUR
BLOODSUGAR WITH THE OTHERS AND THE
SOUND IS SO GOOD!

OH, THERE YOU GO! TOO GREEN WITH
WHAT YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD FOLLOW AFTER
A VIOLENCE MENTAL SESSION YOU SPENT THE
REST OF THE NIGHT "RECOGNIZING" ON THE OLD
BUMPY BLANKET OF AN ELECTRICAL RISK.

AND BEHOLD! THERE COMES YOURS! NOT REALLY
IN THE MOOD TO DANCE OR REALLY STAND UP
YOU WATCH THE REST OF THE SHOW FROM THE
COMFORT OF THE FRONT'S AMP LIFE LINE SHOT
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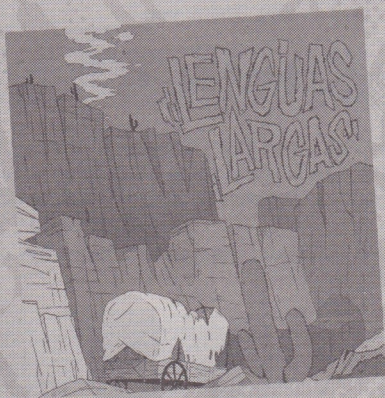
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Fuck What They Say, It Doesn't Matter Anyway

If there's one thing I'll never be able to live down, it's that I was handed punk rock through cable television. It wasn't through a well-stocked, well-intentioned record store. It was out in the suburbs, sitting on the couch, watching TV. But that particular strain of punk will only get you so far. It's punk that's designed to either burn you out or sink you into a rut. As you can most likely assume, my exposure didn't end there.

I had just graduated high school in the summer of 2002 and was destined to remain at the community college I had just spent my last two years of high school at. I had a god awful job that paid me more money than I had—or still have—ever made. I was, for the most part, burning out on punk. We weren't seventeen anymore, we were eighteen. The silly punk rock teenage whimsy had deflated. Acting the part made us feel stupid and immature. I thought this was punk's fault and it was to some extent. But there was more out there I had yet to find.

It was that summer I took a chance on a used CD called *Situationist Comedy*. Points turned. And on top of that, the band was playing in L.A. in a couple weeks. At the show I picked up some merch from the band. The guy behind the table handed me a copy of *Razorcake* #09, I told him I didn't want it, mistaking it for *Skratch*. He looked at me perplexed and explained, "It's free. Why wouldn't you take it?" I caved, took it, and walked away. Many points turned.

For the last ten plus years I've tried to be as involved in DIY punk culture as possible. I have been fascinated from the beginning with what I determined were the four elements of punk: be in band, do a zine, set up shows, and run a label. I tried to be as involved in any of

those worlds as much as I could. The first attempts were riddled with failure, but you eventually learn from your mistakes.

Eleven years later I find myself an integral part of the same zine I had originally passed on at the show. I'm familiar with the processes of printing zines and pressing records, setting up shows, and forming bands. I now create items that I used to expect to buy. I've learned the necessity of participation. We can only sustain through our own activity.

If you study punk's history, or just stick around long enough, you become familiarized with its waves. Tides change, and then change again. Whether it's trends in music, politics, or haircuts, there's always a progression and regression. Deep down, there are ever-existing ideas that are easily overlooked. They're the life force of DIY punk and the essential inspirations and the active propellants. They are ideas that boil down to simplicities that other cultures so easily disregard. Things like "take care of each other" and "do it yourself," have been repeated into meaninglessness, but I feel they are at the core of what punk is. They are what turn consumers of a culture into members of a community.

These last seven years I've been with Razorcake have solidified a lot of my core beliefs. Beliefs people disregarded when I was a young fucker shooting my mouth off. Beliefs that I don't even really like to talk about as much as I did then. The years have buried them deeper inside me. They've been tested. They stand strong.

As you may have seen, this is issue #75. In any year that would be a milestone, but in 2013 it's fucking jaw-dropping. Thanks for hanging on. Thanks for participating.

—Daryl Gussin

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**"Good things
mostly come by
a trackless path,
bad things always
come with a trail of
consequences."**

—Knut Hamsun,
Growth of the Soil

THANK YOU: Elton John glasses—fuck yeah—thanks to Amy Adoyzie and Shanty Cheryl for the Alice Bag cover design and photo; Is it really that easy? Vomit and poo and I'm sold thanks to Brad Beshaw for his illo. in Sean's column; TPS Reports go up in flames next to the water cooler thanks to Craig Horky for his illo. in Jim's column; We need dark angels to keep fluffy ones in check thanks to Marcos Siref for his illo. in Dale's column; Aw shit, not the glasses. That sucks, thanks to Bill Pinkel for his illo. in Nørb's column; Thanks to Wall Piss for his encouragement in the Rhythm Chicken photo; The photo of Jackie Rusted's fingertip after it was caught in a belt sander is gnarly thanks for her illo. in Gary's column; Ripped-open blood bag thanks to Alex Barrett for his illo. in Patrick O'Neil's guest memoir; If the body's a temple, here's the taffy? Soundman's bummed/scrote cable, thanks to Ryan Leach and Canderson for the interviews and photos in the Lost Sounds oral history; Whoah, I dorked out on plastic thanks to Nørb, Julia Smut, Dave Eck, Candice Tobin, Kari Hamanaka, and Replay Dave for helping me out with the "For the Love of Vinyl" article; How can you not feel proud to be from East L.A. when such a great lady is still making fantastic music in our midst thanks to Nardvuar, Amy Adoyzie, Shanty Cheryl, and Rishbha Bhagi for the interview, layout, photos, and transcription of the Alice Bag interview; The rich and powerful who cry for war need to shut the fuck up or join the military and get shot at thanks to Chris Pepus and Mars Bravo for the text and graphics to "War and the American Elite" (dedicated to my brother, who is retiring this month after twenty years of service in the army); It's like a beach with Kirkegaard as the tour guide—the fun's in the contemplation of grayness thanks to Jenny Angelillo, Matt Average, and Donofthedeath for the Cat Party interview, layout, and photos; Damned if you don't like the music. "You should really interview us" if you do thanks to the following reviewers who participated in #75's rotation of music, zines, books, and videos: Sal Lucci, Nørb, Keith Rosson, MP Johnson, Rick Ecker, Sean Koepenick, Matt Average, Juan Espinosa, Art Ettinger, Garrett Barnwell, Kristen K., Bryan Static, Billups Allen, Chris Terry, Tim Brooks, Paul J. Comeau, Ian Wise, Ty Stranglehold, Kurt Morris, Jimmy Alvarado, Craven Rock, Mike Frame, Dave Williams, Rene Navarro, Matt Seward, Jim Woster, Aphid Peewit, Dave Brainwreck, and Steve Hart; The following folks did their part so we could do our part. They lent us a helping hand the past two months: Candice Tobin, Kari Hamanaka, Matthew Hart, Phill Legault, Marty Ploy, Chris Baxter, Mary Clare Stevens, Andrew Wagher, Rene Navarro, Adrian Salas, Mars Bravo, Rishbha Bhagi, Adrian Chi, Megan Pants, Jenn Swann, George Rager (real last name), Alex Martinez, Jimmy Alvarado, Noah Wolf, Matt Average, Ever Velasquez, Joe Dana, Christina Zamora, Juan Espinosa, Sean Arenas, Aaron Kovacs, Nicole Macias, Julia Smut, Jenn Witte, Dave Eck, Chris Pepus, George Lopez, Donna Ramone, Tim Burkett, Jeff Proctor, Josh Rosa, Toby Tober, Sal Lucci, Johnny Volume, Jennifer Federico, Nighthawk, Marcos Siref, Steve Thueson, Evan Wolff, Ronnie Sullivan, Marcus Solomon, Bill Pinkel, Kurt Morris, Katie Dunne, Danny Poulos, Jason Armadillo, Laura Collins, Nation of Amanda, and Derek Whipple.



The Rhythm Chicken ruckus at Mariachi Plaza (skater side) in Boyle Heights.

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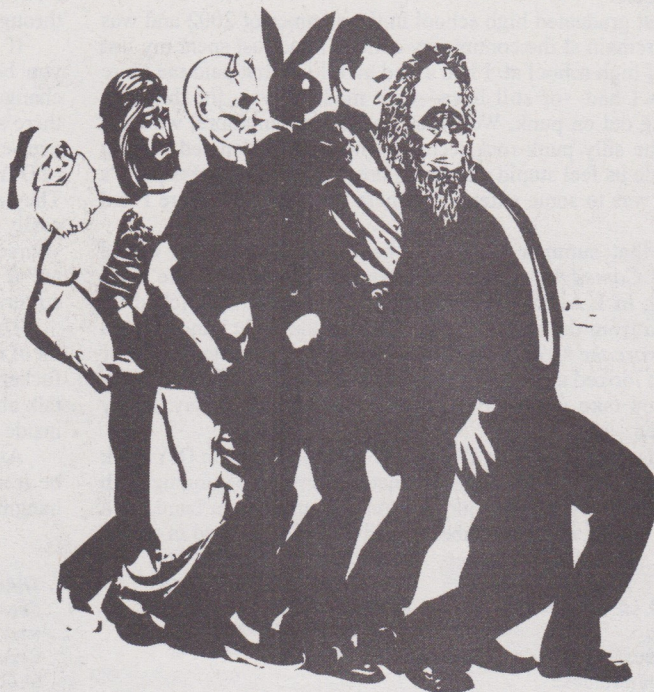
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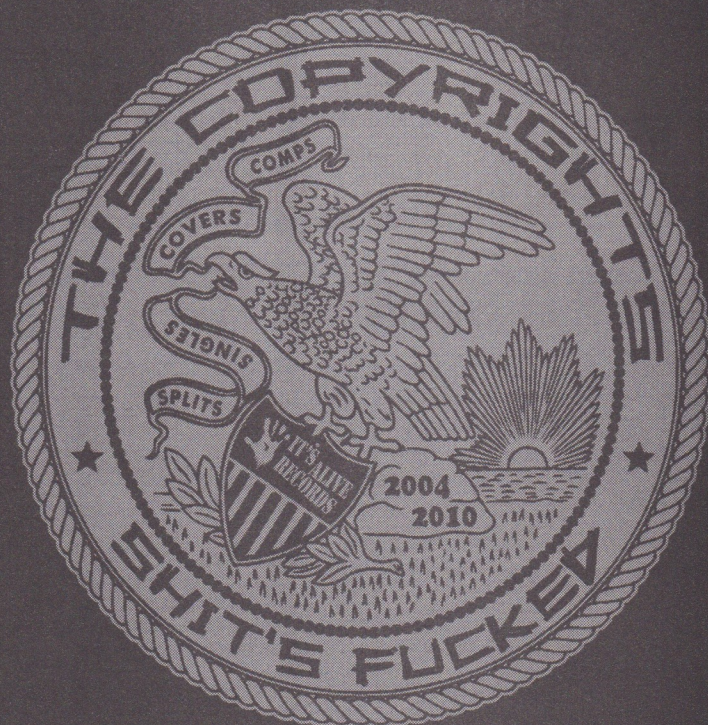


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"The distinction that really matters is not between violence and non-violence, but between having and not having an appetite for power." —George Orwell, "Lear, Tolstoy and the Fool"

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A MONKEY TO RIDE THE DOG

SEAN CARSWELL

"I wouldn't want to raise someone with respect for authority."

Childfree

Felizon and I were having dinner with a famous author. It was just the three of us. The famous author was the headliner of a literary event; I was on the undercard of said event. The dinner was supposed to be in our honor, but no one seemed to want to talk to us—which was fine with me. I'm a fan of this famous author. I was happy to just hang out with her.

Eventually, the conversation rolled around to children. This happens to Felizon and me all the time. We've been married for more than a decade. We got together nearly eighteen years ago. Surely, I should've knocked her up by now. Unless something is horribly wrong with us. Unless we're some kind of mutants. At least that's the way people tend to act around us when the subject of breeding comes up.

When I tell people I don't have kids, it usually elicits the reaction I would expect if I told them I just shit the rug.

This case was different. The famous author has also made the choice to not have children. We didn't ask her why she didn't have kids. To me, an answer seemed obvious. Her first book hit it big when she was in her late twenties. She spent the next twenty years writing for nearly every major publication, touring incessantly, directing a highly-reputable university writing program, writing a handful of books, and traveling to Paris, Mongolia, Tibet, Iceland, and other places I'd like to go right now. So I didn't ask the question that always seems to follow the revelation that someone is well into childbearing years and doesn't have kids: "Why not?"

Felizon told the famous author that she'd written her doctoral dissertation on prejudices against people who choose to not have kids, choose to be "childfree," as Felizon puts it. We talked about all the questions that tend to follow this revelation: Aren't you afraid you'll be sorry when you get older? What if you end up regretting this decision? Are you sure you made the right choice? We discussed the irony that no one asks these exact same questions of people who choose to bring a child into the world, even though they're the more appropriate people to ask.

The famous author said she'd written an essay on choosing to be childfree. She was reticent about publishing it, though, because she knew it would open up a world

of criticism. She knew that, even in the twenty-first century, a professional woman can't openly say that she'd rather spend her days writing, reading, teaching, headlining author events, and traveling the world than babysitting. And I know she's right.

She's at a disadvantage, though. She writes for mainstream publications and sells her books mostly to women (and mostly to women who have had kids). For her to come out and write an essay explaining why she doesn't want kids would seem like a castigation of all of her fans who have had kids. That's why I'm calling her "the famous author" instead of using her name. I'll let her stir up her own trouble.

As for me, I write for this here punk rock magazine. I can get away with saying those things that we can't say in the twenty-first century. Punk rockers expect it from me. So, with this in mind, I've outlined my biggest reasons for not having kids. For those of you who have chosen to have kids, I want to be clear. I'm perfectly okay with you making that decision for yourself. I'm responding here to the people who want to make that decision for me.

So, without further adieu, here are my top five reasons for remaining childfree.

5. Come On, Man, I'm a Punk Rocker

If that kid comes out anything like me, she's gonna be an obstinate child. She's gonna want to go against everything I say and everything I do. I'd want her to. If I did choose to breed, I wouldn't want to raise someone with respect for authority or who does what she's told. I'd want to raise an independent thinker. And this would bite me in the ass. I've already seen this happen to my brother. His son looks and acts hauntingly similar to me when I was his age. He wasn't even seven before I heard him say to my brother, "I hate you, Dad." It wouldn't bode well for my child. The fact that my wife is a punk rocker and perhaps more stubborn and anti-authoritarian than I am would only make matters worse.

4. It Seems Like a Lot of Babysitting.

I've heard all the arguments about how amazing it is to have a kid, about how you don't really know what love is until you've

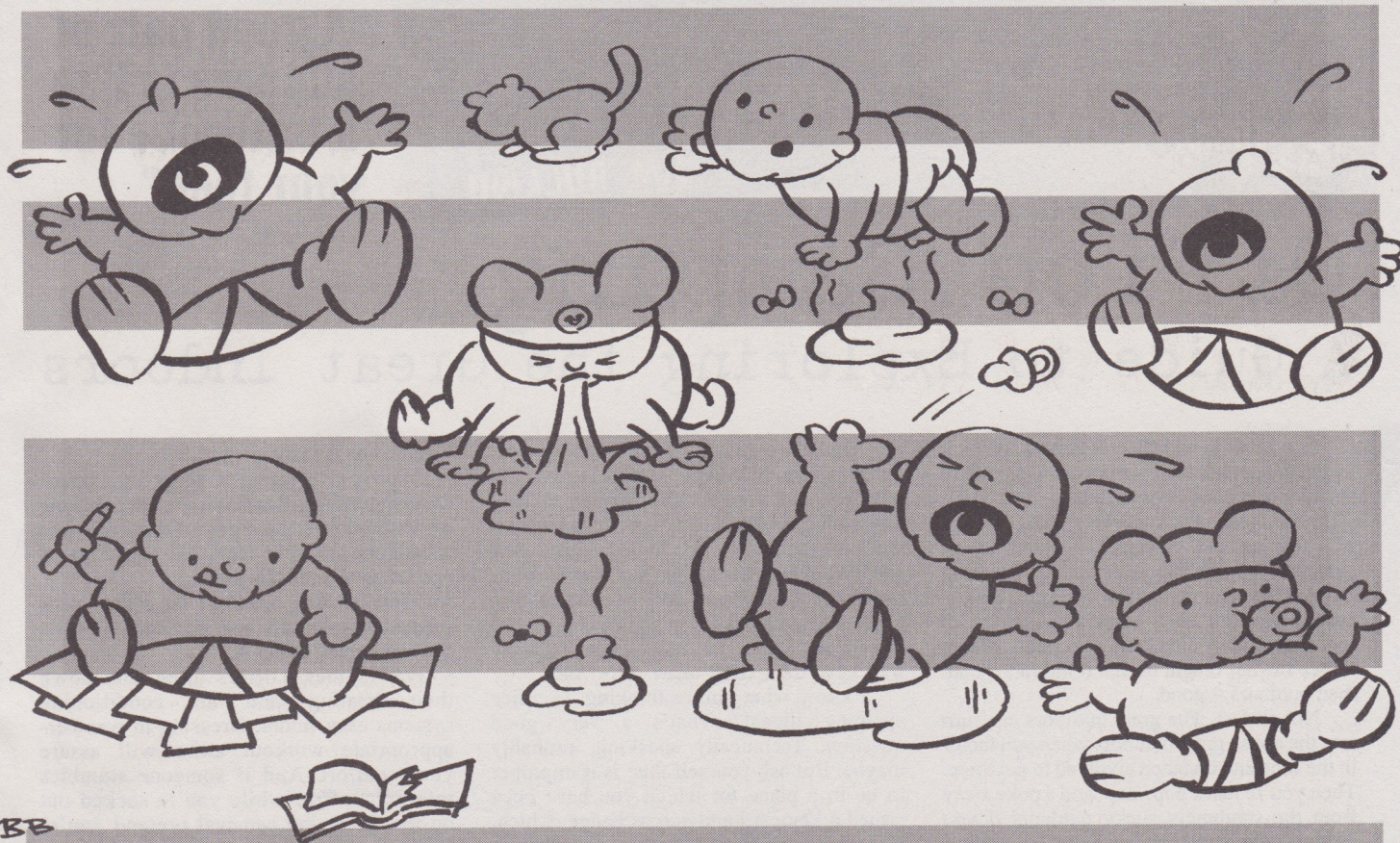
had a child, about how it's a miracle and whatnot. All of this may be true. I may be missing out on the deepest form of love and skipping the opportunity to create one of the seven billion miracles walking the earth right now. I'm also skipping out on a self-inflicted, 24/7 babysitting job. Which is okay with me. Right now, if someone in my house is crying in the middle of the night, I can sleep right through it. And, perhaps more to the point, no one in my house is crying in the middle of the night. I don't have to change diapers. Ever. I've changed maybe two diapers in my life, and that's two too many. If you can't secure your piss and shit, I don't want you in my house. And, as far as I can tell, this amazing connection I'd get to have with a kid if I had one would mostly entail me sitting somewhere, watching the kid try a million things she's not supposed to do, and stopping her from doing that. I'm just not into that.

3. Kids Are Fucking Boring.

They show you artwork that sucks. I know they'll get better. When they do, I'll look at it. Until then, I don't want to see some stick figures in crayon and act like I'm moved. They play with boring shit like dolls and matchbox cars and video games. It's good for their imagination, I know. But it's not good for mine. I've moved beyond these things. I'd rather read a novel. Kids listen to shitty music and watch lousy TV shows and movies. By not having one, I don't have to listen to any Jack Johnson albums. I don't have to watch the Disney Channel or Nickelodeon. I don't have to sit through the racist, sexist, classist drivel that passes for kids' movies these days. I know that the protagonist of the new movie *Brave* doesn't want to get married, and I'm supposed to pretend that's progressive. But isn't she still a rich, white princess? Shouldn't we, at some point, move beyond princes and princesses in general? Shouldn't we think a lot more about the fucked up values these movies teach our kids?

The real answer, I don't have to care. I'm not gonna watch it. I don't have any offspring dragging me to it.

This isn't to say I don't like kids. I do. I like playing with my nieces and nephews. I



BB
G-13

BRAD BESHAW

We do fun shit that doesn't include telling someone not to eat something he found on the ground.

especially like it when they're doing things I like to do, like kicking a soccer ball around or skateboarding. I like spending time with most of my friends' kids, too. But I also like there to be a limit on the amount of time I spend with kids. After a couple of hours, I typically want to spend the next couple of days with adults.

2. I Like My Life.

I have a lot of fun on a daily basis. I play music with friends usually once a week. I get up most mornings and write on novels or short stories or essays or *Razorcake* columns. I read three or four books a week. I go surfing when there are waves. I still go to the skatepark despite the fact that I claimed, in these very pages, that I was too old to skate when I was six years younger than I am now. I'm one of two people who started this magazine. I started a publishing company and still run it. I have a really interesting job that pays me to research

whatever I'm interested in. I travel a lot. I was in San Francisco last weekend, Flagstaff a few weeks ago, and I'm going to the U.K. in August. I get to spend a lot of time with my wife. It's quality time. We do fun shit that doesn't include school plays or little league games or telling someone not to eat something he found on the ground. When I'm at home, I can play whatever records I want to listen to. I can play punk rock songs on the ukulele and scream at the top of my lungs and not bother anyone. As far as I can tell, having a kid would mean trading most of this for babysitting duty.

1. I Don't Want One.

This is the only reason that really matters. I wouldn't be doing my hypothetical child any favors by bringing him into the world just so I could resent him. Felizon is in the same boat. She has a career she likes. She likes her life without kids. She does a lot of the fun things I just

listed and a lot of things that are fun for her. We're pretty happy as we are. No one needs us to have a kid. The survival of the species doesn't depend on us breeding.

Again, I don't mean to attack anyone for having a kid. A lot of my friends and family members have decided to have kids. Almost all of them are good parents. I honor almost all of their decisions. I do know some people who have been pressured into having kids they didn't want, too. That's not a good situation. In general, if you don't want kids, I think you should avoid having them. It's pretty easy to prevent pregnancies these days. There are enough unwanted kids out there. There's no need to create another one. There's no need to feel like you're being selfish or a dick because you've chosen to not have kids.

—Sean Carswell



RAZORCAKE 07



LAZY MICK

JIM RULAND

"A good pair of slippers is like a bathrobe for your feet."

Office Camping

A Guide to Exploring the Great Indoors

You work in an office. You hate working in an office because working in an office sucks. But it doesn't have to.

Like most office workers, your dreams of escaping the drudgery of your office existence probably involve galumphing around the mountains, frolicking in a dew-soaked meadow, or a quick and dirty romp (not that kind of dirty) across a sandy beach. Office life has taught us that if indoors = bad, then outdoors = good.

Not so fast. The great outdoors can turn into the not so great outdoors when you factor in the time and distance involved to get there. Then you're just a hop, skip, and a poke away from the supremely sucky outdoors if you happen to encounter bugs, bears, or seeping ass rashes from toxic sumac.

But when considering alternative escapes, have you ever wondered what it would be like to spend the night, weekend, or even an entire holiday break in your office while it's closed for business? Have you ever dreamt of having the entire facility to yourself while your coworkers are asleep in their beds? Have you ever considered the wonders that await you right underneath your nose?

If so, you are not alone. If not, go back to picking the lint out of your underwear because it obviously hasn't seen any action lately. But if you fit the description of this particular kind of thrill-seeker, here are some tips to help you make the most of your office camping experience.

What Kind of Camper Are You?

There are three types of corporate campers: the accidental overnighiter, the desperate squatter, and the office adventurer.

The accidental overnighiter doesn't intend to spend the night at the office, but circumstance beyond his or her control—like looming deadlines and early morning conference calls with assholes in Eastern Time zones—often result in an unexpected overnight sojourn on the office sofa. Sometimes a power nap turns into surrender slumber. That doesn't count.

The desperate squatter spends the night in the office because he has no other alternative. When he's been run out of all the coffee shops and twenty-four hour fitness centers in the area, he turns to the office. He is not a happy camper and may even smell funny. He is to be avoided at all costs.

The office adventurer is someone who possesses an inquisitive mind and seeks out new experiences. She is open-minded and adventurous. She is able to transform the humdrum into the hunky dory. She boldly goes where she has gone many times before and can still find something kinda sorta amazing.

Office Camping and the Law

I know what you're thinking. Is office camping illegal? That's a very good question. Technically speaking, probably maybe. But ask yourself this: is it improper to be in a place for which you have been issued a key card and access badge, which, if you lose, you have to replace even though those things are hella expensive and a bitch to keep track of?

Heck No!

Most offices are located on private property, which your employer leases for a tidy sum. Now, did your employer lease that property for just a fraction of the day?

Heck No Again!

So by making use of the office when no one else is, you are actually helping your company maximize its investment. As for questions of legality, what you do on your own time is none of the leaseholder's business. However, keep in mind that your company does not lease the common areas in the building. Common areas are often nicer than the offices themselves with comfortable furnishings and fragrant flowers. Trying to explain your presence in these areas at 3:30 on a Wednesday morning to over-zealous security guards can be a dodgy bit of business. So when you go office camping, it's imperative that you stay in the office and away from the common areas. When you're in a common area, you're on camera.

Supplies

The motto of every good camper is to be prepared, and it's no different here in the great indoors. Just as it's essential to bring supplies that will ensure your comfort and safety in the wild, it's up to you to bring what you need from home to make sure that your office camping experience is a positive one.

What to Bring

- Slippers. Everything is better in slippers. Drinking coffee. Reading the paper. Jerking off in the sink. A good pair of slippers is like a bathrobe for your feet. Just slip them on and let your cares slip away.
- Pillow. If you work in an office, neck support is essential, and that empty FedEx box isn't going to cut it.
- Gym clothes. Offices often shut down their heating and air conditioning systems after hours. Dressing in weather-appropriate workout attire will assure your comfort. And if someone stumbles into your office while you're sacked out on the floor you can just pretend you're working on your abs.

What Not to Bring

- Flares
- Firearms
- Flashlights.
- No crime stuff. Think to yourself, "If I were a criminal, what would I bring?" Then don't bring those things because you are not a criminal. (Nothing against criminals.) A criminal is just another name for outside-the-box-thinkers who get caught. Don't get caught. Stay in the box.

What to Eat

You'd be surprised how much good food goes to waste in office refrigerators each week. While the office fridge can be a tempting source of sustenance, it's best to steer clear. Chomping down on some leftover Chinese can stave off hunger for a few hours, but it can make for some uncomfortable exchanges in the community kitchen on Monday morning.

The beauty of office camping is that most of what you need is already on hand. You can make a tasty soup with nothing but ketchup packets, coffee creamers and hot water. Get creative. Pick the miniature marshmallows out of the hot cocoa packet and melt them in the microwave with chocolate from the receptionist's candy bowl and some saltine crackers for some kick-ass office s'mores. The only limit is your imagination. Unless, of course, there's no food to speak of at your office. Not even a leftover packet of soy sauce. Then you're going to have bring your own.



If you get really hungry. Fuck it. Order a pizza. This isn't Pyongyang.

What to Bring

- Energy bars
- Bottled water
- Fruit (the non-leaky kind)
- A nice salad
- If you get really hungry. Fuck it. Order a pizza. This isn't Pyongyang.

Where to Sleep

It is best to find a place where you will be comfortable. Somebody in your company probably has a sofa in their office. As tempting as this might be, it's a good idea to avoid sleeping on other people's furniture. You also want to steer clear of high-traffic areas in the event that one of your co-workers or supervisors stops by to pick up something they left in the office, like a microchip with secret company files or vials of cocaine. Plus, dime to dollar says that sofa has seen some extra-marital action.

Ew

Tell me about it. The best place to sleep is under the conference room table. It's dark, it's quiet, and in the event that you do oversleep and someone comes in early, no one is going to stumble into you.

Wildlife

Office camping presents very little in the way of interaction with other living creatures. In fact, it can get kind of lonely, which is precisely the point.

Predators

The key to successful office camping is to avoid detection. Office campers should avoid all contact with security personnel. If you do encounter a security officer in the course of his rounds, keep your wits and don't fidget. You want your body language to convey that you belong there. Security personnel are accustomed to bumping into people working late nights or who come into the office over the weekend. Act natural. As strange as it may seem to you, the security guard has seen weirder things than you.

Really?

Yes, really. Your biggest concern is the cleaning crew. Prior to your stay, if it's not already in your habit to do so, log a few late nights at the office. Make note of when the staff comes to clean your office and find out how long they spend on your floor. It's always a good idea to get to know the cleaning crew—and for them

to get to know you. That way if they do find you sleeping on a mattress of status reports they won't get frightened and call the police.

Fire

What's a camping experience without a fire, right? Wrong. It's never a good idea to introduce fire to your office environment. Anything that triggers the alarm and or sprinkler system is a good way to get invited to spend the night in another unconventional indoor environment: city jail, which you swore you would never let happen again, remember?

Oh, Yeah

Instead, crumple up some red, orange and yellow paper (now you know what those reams of goldenrod are for) and place them in a circle of coffee cups. Isn't that nice?

But What About Singing Songs around the Campfire?

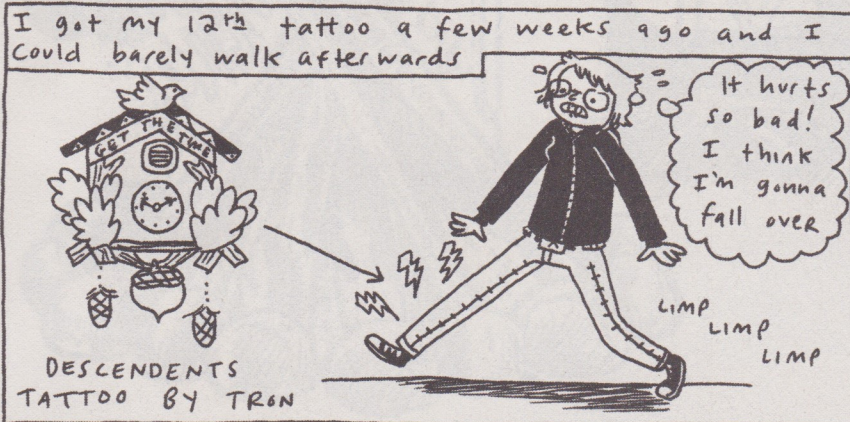
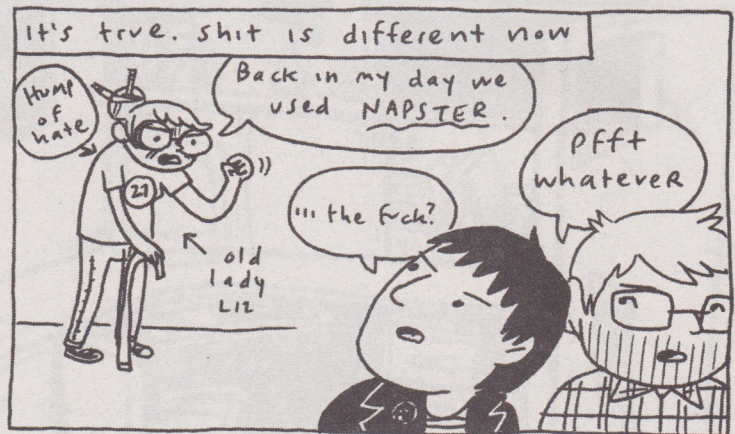
Negatory. They have YouTube for that.

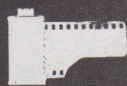
You're No Fun

You're the one sleeping in an office.

—Jim Ruland







Shanty Cheryl's Photo Page

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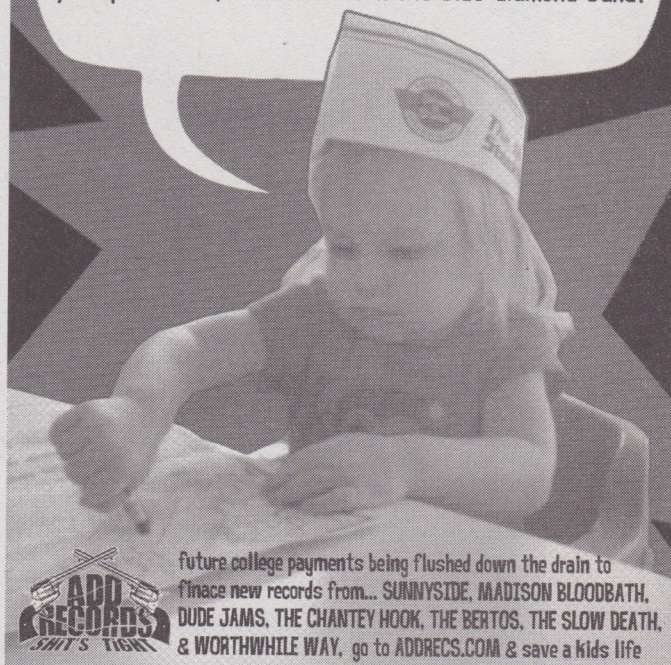
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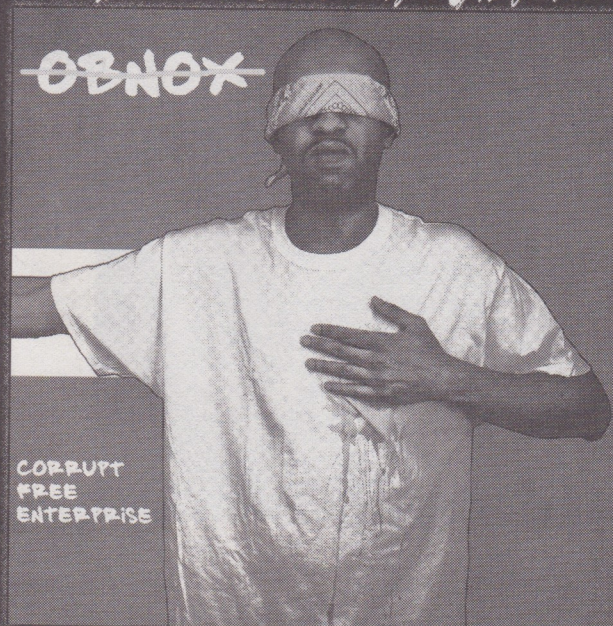
dear razorcake readers please buy records from my daddy or i will starve to death. his record label is called a.d.d. he thinks it's a job but it's really more of a hobby. anyway, i'm really hungry. he has records from a bunch of bands with stupid names like apocalypse meow, unfun, sandspur city, worthwhile way, your pest band, & nato coles & the blue diamond band.



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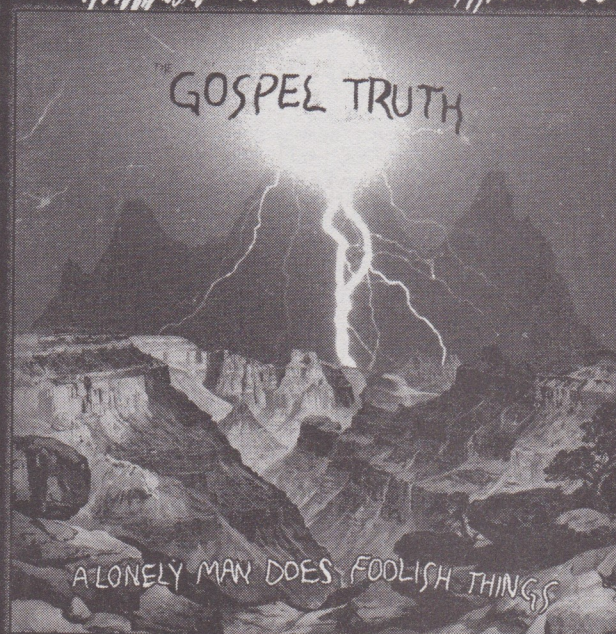
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THE GOSPEL TRUTH

A Lonely Man Does
Foolish Things LP



A LONELY MAN DOES FOOLISH THINGS



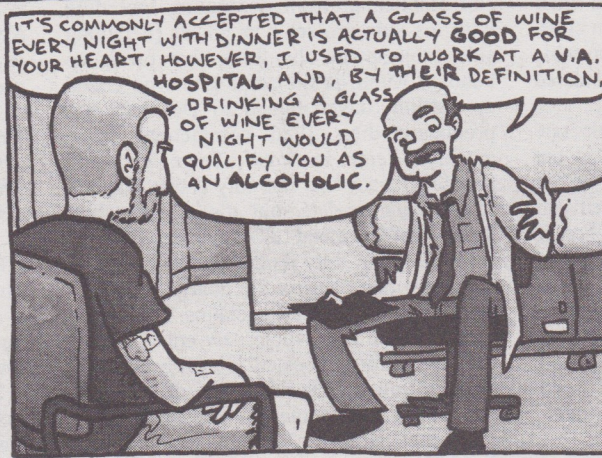
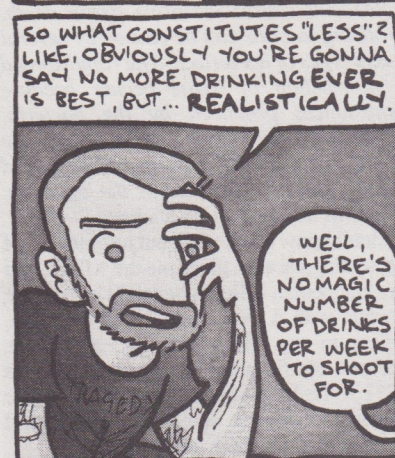
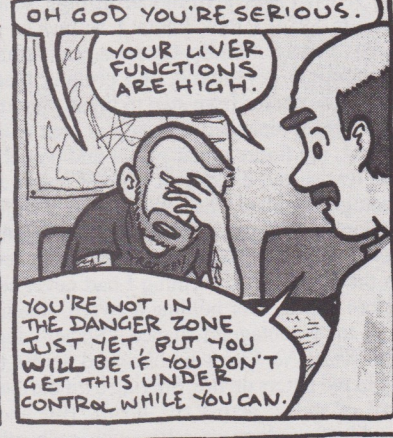
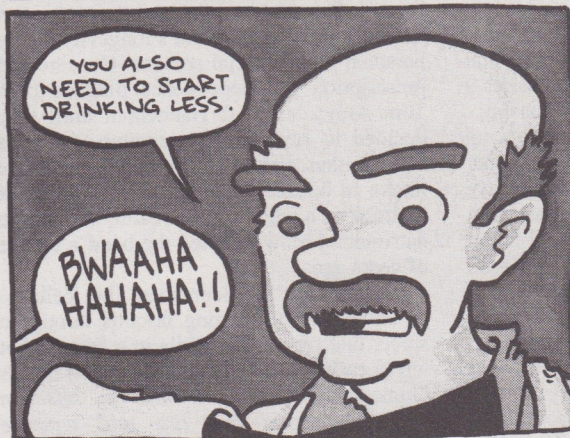
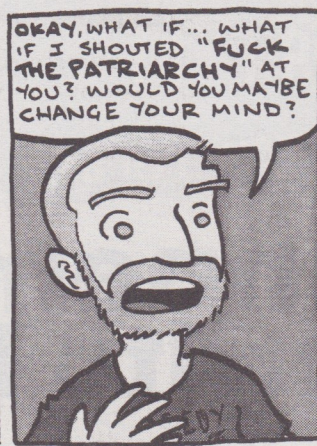
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MYSTOPID LIFE

BY MITCH CLEM + NATION OF AMANDA





I'M AGAINST IT

DESIGNATED DALE

"Reign in
Peace, Jeff."

The Jeff Hanneman Memorial Burrito Run

When I was a freshman in high school back in 1984, I took Photo 1 as one of my elective classes. Photo 1 gave a crash-course in shooting, developing, and printing black-and-white photos from start to finish. Students were seated alphabetically and as luck would have it, my future guitar player and homeboy Bill was seated directly in front of me in that photography class where we first met. I vividly remember Bill wearing an old, faded denim jacket with some crazy-ass, black patch sewn on the back with something I had never seen before: a Minotaur holding a sword, standing next to a pentagram-shaped "Slayer" logo, with *Show No Mercy* emblazoned across the top in red letters on fire. Sharing a ginourmous love of music across the board, Bill and I would often share cassettes with each other to listen to on our generic Walkmans in class. (Remember, this was 1984 and portable headphone cassette players were considered the cat's ass at the time).

It was overcast and rainy outside one particular day, and since we couldn't go out to shoot our next assignments, we sat at our desks for the whole period. Bill reached into his backpack and busted out his headphones, stuck in a tape, and I could hear a static of machine gun hissing and wailing in back of me as soon as he clicked it on. After a few seconds, I turned around, I asked, "What the hell are you listening to, man?" "Slayer," he said, pulling off his headphones and handing 'em to me. "This is the band on the back of you jacket?" I asked, putting the headphones on.

Whoa. Right then and there, my ears got lawn-mowed by the track "The Final Command" from their debut album *Show No Mercy*. I had never heard anything like that and there I was, getting an introduction by one of their biggest fans to a band that would go on to be the biggest (and most important) crossover band that bridged metal and punk rock. This kicked open a whole new door of exploration.

Slayer released that debut album only a year earlier, so the only other material they had available at the time was their *Haunting*

the Chapel EP that came out a year later in 1984. That was *it*, but even with just these releases, I quickly learned through Bill that they had one of the most gnarly fan bases a band could ask for. They still do to this day.

Guitarists Jeff Hanneman and Kerry King formed Slayer in 1981 and soon got bassist/vocalist Tom Araya and drum murderer Dave Lombardo onboard to pour the cast iron meld of the most blistering, frenzied metal to head-butt you right between the eyes with the chimp strength and fuck-all attitude of honest-to-goodness punk rock. Not since Motörhead had a band brought the two fan bases together under one venue roof, and Slayer did it in spades.

Record producer Rick Rubin discouraged Jeff Hanneman from continuing recording with his side project Pap Smear (believing side projects are the thing that break up bands).¹ Rubin is the same guy who ended up getting Slayer signed to Def Jam and producing their 1986 commercial debut monster, *Reign in Blood*. There are some people who say that not only is this Slayer's finest work to date, but it's also the best thrash and/or metal album ever released. With the heavy duty production accentuating the entire band across the board, it's pretty darned hard to argue those claims. This album itself ushered in a whole new era of bands, not to mention boosted Slayer's already-rabid following. Speaking of this record, you wanna have some fun and stump some of the most steadfast fans? Do what our own Todd Taylor does whenever someone brings up *Reign in Blood*—ask them what brand of beer the band is clutching on the back cover. Gets 'em almost every time, and he even got me on this awhile back, even though I'm the consummate tooth comber of record cover details. The beer is Stella Artois, a Belgian beer, by the way.

Slayer enjoyed worldwide success from 1986 and on, touring extensively across the globe. Yet, like just about every other band, they've had their share of mishaps. Drummer

Dave Lombardo has come and gone a few times throughout the band's longevity due to personal and financial reasons. Cocaine and prescription pill dependence plagued both Tom Araya and Jeff Hanneman until they decided to say enough's enough, get their shit together, and strictly limit their fun-time intake to booze. Things seemed to be back on track as a whole for the band, but a more detrimental blow affected the band a couple of years ago.

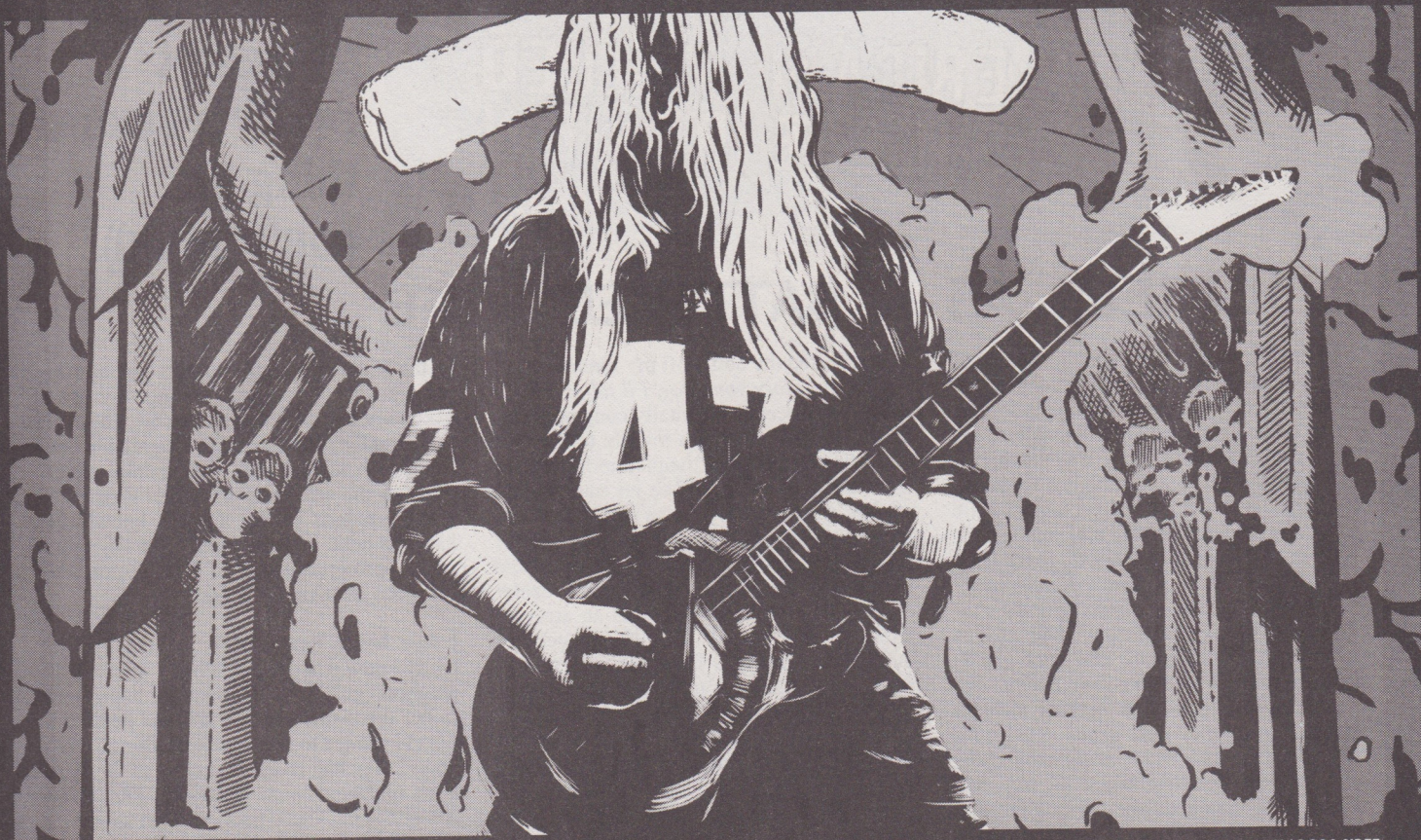
According to Hanneman, he believes he contracted necrotizing fasciitis through a spider bite on his arm while in a friend's hot tub in early 2011. Webster's definition of this unimaginable shit is: "a bacterial infection of... the tissues that line and separate muscles that causes extensive tissue death. Necrotizing fasciitis can be caused by several different types of bacteria.... The rapid spread and destruction of tissue occurs because of substances produced by the bacteria. Treatment involves the use of high-dose antibiotics and surgical removal of dead and infected tissue to help control the infection. Also known as flesh-eating bacteria."

I don't know about y'all, but just the idea of a flesh-eating bacteria gives me the willies, and where Hanneman believes he might have come in contact with it freaks me out all the more. Needless to say, Hanneman had no choice but to pull out for some upcoming tour dates in 2011 to be hospitalized for some intensive procedures, including some insanely painful skin grafts and total body rehabilitation.

All the while, the only thing he wanted to do was play his guitar, which he started to do immediately after his arms recovered. More than a year later in 2012, Hanneman was recovering, but not up to his one hundred percent, balls-out self that he exuded onstage during every show he performed, so he limited himself to make a complete recovery. It wasn't until around April of this year that Jeff discovered he had alcohol-related cirrhosis of the liver, which quickly ended up getting the best of

¹ After their debut and EP, Slayer recorded and released one more full length with Metal Blade in 1985, *Hell Awaits*, which further solidified their spot in the burgeoning thrash metal scene. It must be noted here that in 1984, Jeff Hanneman, Dave Lombardo, and Rocky George (early Suicidal Tendencies guitar slinger) had a short-lived side project delightfully entitled Pap Smear, which allowed Hanneman (in which he sang and played bass) to even further

cut loose with his beloved roots of punk rock that he was already bringing to the table in Slayer as a riff-ripping guitar player. Although never officially releasing any records, a couple of re-worked Pap Smear tunes appeared on the 1996 release, *Undisputed Attitude*, which is a collection of punk covers done Slayer-style, and the four original Pap Smear demos can be found fairly easy if you poke around online enough.



MARCOS SIREF

Hanneman passed on May 2, 2013 due to liver failure. He was forty-nine years old.

him when he passed on May 2, 2013 due to liver failure.

He was forty-nine years old.

Friends and family organized a memorial service open to the public at the Hollywood Palladium three weeks later, and being that I was scheduled off that day (as was my buddy George from the Neighborhood Brats), we planned on being two of the 3,700 people they were gonna let in free on a first-come, first-in basis from 3:30 to 7:30. Deciding to get down there earlier in the afternoon to eat at The Waffle next door (place kills, by the way) and scope out the line, we drove up to the venue around 1:00 and found a line snaking halfway around the building, and we hadn't even eaten anything yet. Shit.

I rolled up to the next light to get back onto Sunset and muttered to George, "This is some bullshit and I'm leaning towards driving to East Los to get a burrito. Whaddya think?" George paused for one second and said, "Well, we can go stand in line now, or we can go get a fuckin' burrito in East L.A., come back, and still stand in line. Jeff Hanneman's already dead, it's not like he's going anywhere." Laughing, I drove off towards Cypress Park to go claim us a couple of Super Burritos (AKA "porno burritos") at El Atacor #11, which was, and is most

certainly *always*, worth the drive. From that point on, everything was addressed as "The Jeff Hanneman Memorial...", and that trek was christened "The Jeff Hanneman Memorial Burrito Run." Why? Because Jeff would have wanted it that way.

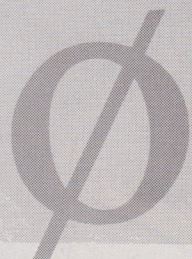
After throwing down at El Atacor, we made our way back over to the Palladium to go grab a spot in line, which was roughly three quarters around the block by now, so it wasn't looking like we were gonna get turned away at all. George asked me out loud, "Is this the line for the Jeff Hanneman Memorial Fun Run?" The downer to this was having to listen to people blasting Slayer on their cell phones in the line and watching a group of kids behind us in line having to pour their forties/tall boys out in the gutter after being spotted by a cluster of LAPD officers making the rounds on their bikes, watching the line closely with every lap. One of the drunken homies standing behind us looked like a Mexican version of Carmine Ragusa from *Laverne and Shirley*, but he looked too young to get the joke. The guy in front of us drove out from Las Vegas for the memorial, and I started to wonder just how far these people drove in from for this, especially because the details of the memorial were tight-lipped.

After finally getting in, we saw a display

of Marshall amps strewn across the stage with one of Hanneman's guitars leaning against each cabinet with a big movie screen above it. Damn it. It didn't look like anyone was going to play, which they didn't. A handful of people spoke, including one of the Marshall Amplification bigwigs (who was also in that shit-tastic band, Grim Reaper), Kerry King, Robert Trujillo (later bassist for Suicidal, now playing in the current shitty band known as Metallica), a message from Jeff's wife, their manager, and some label people. After the speakers spoke, they played a video montage and the place erupted into a few huge pits during "Raining Blood." Was nice, but a bit anti-climatic, especially since the entire band didn't speak and no one played at all, which is a surprise, since that would've sent Hanneman off in true style. Ah, well, it was still a good chance to go and pay some respects to one of the most shredding guitar players who proudly held that punk rock flag high.

Reign in Peace, Jeff.
You've done L.A. and beyond proud.
—Designated Dale
designateddale@yahoo.com





AMERICAN GRILLED CHEESE REVIEW

REV. NØRB

**“It wasn’t
really a sexual
thing ((I
don’t think)).”**

MY CAREER AS A BATTERED WIFE

The punch came first; a roundhouse right i guess you’d call it, catching me squarely on the side of the head and instilling my left ear with profound tinnitus. On the inside of my skull, i am fascinated with the way the ringing fades in—quickly but distinctly—replacing my hearing with a 1000 Hz test tone as if i’d dropped it into Audacity® and applied the “Fade In” function for a smooth, sharp lead-in. *Wasn’t that how Beethoven went deaf? His drunken old man boxing his ears or whatever? Or was that Mozart? Wait, Mozart wasn’t deaf. But didn’t his dad sock him in the head, too? Or was that only Beethoven? Maybe both of their dads banged them in the heads when they were drunk. Christ, i’d drink too if my kids were sitting around the house playing classical music all day.* My internal speculation on the various familial difficulties faced by young composers elapses quite quickly, taking maybe no more than a second or two in real time—which is good, because that’s when i see the bottle. It’s a Pabst® bottle, transferred to her punching hand, moving—temporarily, it seems—in a straight line away from my face. *Ah, the wind-up.* I worked with throwing animations quite a bit at my old video game job, meticulously scrubbing the time sliders this way and that, a thirtieth of a second at a time, in order to hook up the various audio bits that accompany said movements—maybe a grunt, surely a WHOOSH—at the precisely correct instant of the animation. You probably want to put the WHOOSH right when the arm starts moving forward, but you can’t really tell exactly until you test it, because the bottle isn’t part of the animation—it’s a separate object—so the bottle might not be coming out of the hand right when you expect it, and the WHOOSH might sound too sudden or too late. As a result, a projectile-throwing motion is so familiar to me that, as i see it happening in real life, i watch it like a passive observer, with Walt Disney’s™ Twelve Principles of Animation echoing in my head: *Anticipation. Exaggeration. Squash and Stretch.* When the bottle finally does stop retreating away from my face, then comes sailing towards it—with or without a timely WHOOSH—i accept it as the only logical conclusion the situation will bear. I duck, and the bottle smashes against the wall behind me, erupting in a hail of amber glass. In my mind, i am like George W. Bush, artfully ducking and weaving out of the way of that pair of shoes hurled by a testy Iraqi journalist; the next morning, i discover a growing bruise on my wrist that suggests that i merely got my arm up in front of my face

and deflected the bottle off my forearm. *Hey, you tell the story your way, i’ll tell it mine!* I am in the process of mentally congratulating myself at not catching a missile to the face when fingernails enter the picture from stage left, raking across my face en route to my glasses. *God dammit! Always with the fucking fingernails! I HATE the fucking fingernails!* As a kid, one of my favorite sights at the old Prange’s® department store at the center of Green Bay’s downtown was an array of internally-illuminated plastic mannequins mounted on top of a large shelving unit in the bustling Ladies Foundations department. There were about five opaque white plastic torsos, each adorned with a different color of ladies’ undergarments. It wasn’t really a sexual thing ((I don’t think)), it was more just an appreciation of the aesthetics of a red bra next to a black bra next to a green bra next to a yellow one next to a pink one, all displayed on vaguely alien, glowing plastic forms. One single glowing plastic lady-torso likely wouldn’t’ve done much for me; five of them in a row sporting different colored versions of the same unmentionables, i thought, was a sight of great beauty and wonder. I took to drawing the Prange’s underwear mannequins with peculiar frequency at age five, and, when i spied a kindergarten classmate drawing a structure that shared some visual design elements with the then-popular Playtex® Cross-Your-Heart™ bra, i asked her, quite innocently, if she was drawing a brassiere. It was a legit question. My mom never told me i was weird for drawing headless lingerie-wearing mannequins, so i just assumed it was a common thing. Be that as it may, my inquiry as to the subject of my classmate’s ardent Crayola®-ing was met not with a secret handshake, a warm smile, nor a nod of acknowledgement; the response was instead a vicious rake of her fingernails across my face, which drew blood and necessitated some manner of parent-teacher pow-wow a few days later. I have never grown accustomed to having my face clawed by a female. I have never understood why i should need to. Apparently she was drawing a bridge. Excuse me all to fuck. Back in the present day, the current face-clawing ends at my glasses, which are being extracted from my face even as i reminisce about the sunny days of my youth. *AW SHIT, NOT THE GLASSES!* I leap to my feet from my barstool, reaching instinctively for my temples a second too late. My hands grab nothing more substantial than my Croakies™ glasses-holder-onner strap, cold and sweaty

in the aftermath of the night’s set, and my glasses exit my face, leaving my gross glasses-holder-onner strap behind. i hear the lenses as they smash on the ceramic tile floor of the club, adding additional chunks of clear glass to the scattering of amber distributed a few seconds earlier. I don’t know what happens next, because i can’t see any more. In the immortal words of King Louie, i’ve just been Beat Up By A Girl.

I hate being Beat Up By A Girl. I never really know what to do. When i was six, the neighbor girl Bonnie insisted i come over to her driveway, because she and her friend Cheryl wanted to show me something “really gross” they had found in a copy of the latest issue of Huey, Louie & Dewey: *The Junior Woodchucks*. The object of great grossness with which they were so compelled to share turned out to be the thick-lipped image of the “Cave Man Mask” from the Johnson Smith™ novelty company’s ubiquitous full-page ad (“LIFE-LIKE RUBBER MASKS ‘COME TO LIFE’ WHEN WORN!”). When i informed Bonnie ((admittedly somewhat unnecessarily)) that that ad was in every comic book ever made and a rubbery-lipped caveman mask wasn’t overly gross to begin with—therefore this was hardly the type of thing i needed to have called to my attention—she responded by biting my thumb. Really hard. When i say “biting,” i don’t mean she was nipping at the end of my thumb; somehow, she had gotten my thumb all the way in her mouth ((I have no idea how my thumb wound up in that seven-year-old girl’s mouth, officer!)), and was clamped down on the bone, midway between the knuckle and the hand. I don’t know if you’ve ever had anyone chomping down full-blast on one of your proximal phalanges before, but it FUCKING HURTS. It really fucking hurts. As this crazy seven-year-old chick attempts to bite my thumb off, her friend Cheryl helpfully starts whipping me with her plastic jump rope. It’s not as much fun as it sounds. Try as i might, i cannot get this berserk little girl’s jaws off my fucking thumb bone, so i do the only thing that i figure might work: I bite her cheek hard enough to make her yell, which in turn causes her to release her vise-like grip on my digit, facilitating my escape. I mean, what else could i do? I suppose i could have smashed the heel of my hand into the bridge of her nose, driving the bone into her brain and killing her, but who’s to say that’d even make her open up her mouth, ya know? I bit her face, got my thumb, and went home.



In my mind, i am like George W. Bush, artfully ducking and weaving out of the way of that pair of shoes hurled by a testy Iraqi journalist.

That wound up being another big parental shitstorm; her mom called my mom, and what the hell kind of vicious hooligan was she raising, and you're kicked out of our yard for life, and all that kind of crap. What exactly would she have me do? Gallantly get my thumb bitten off like a young gentleman?

Back in the real world, i am surrounded by horrified girls and apologetic bouncers checking on my health. I can't really hear what anybody's saying, since the band is playing and, minus corrective lenses, lip-reading is no longer possible. I shrug a few times and say "sorry, crazy ex-girlfriend," which i figure is a universally-understood-enough concept to require no further elucidation. A half hour later, a cop takes me out to his car. Apparently, the whole assault was caught on the bar's security cameras

((weird in and of itself)), so he's got cop questions for me. When Officer #1 can be bothered to stop yakking with his buddy about tomorrow's Michigan game, he asks me if we've ever lived together. I'm like, "Yeah...late '80s, early '90s, something like that," a bit embarrassed that i can't do better on the dates. He then tells me that, since we cohabitated—albeit a quarter-century ago—he is charging her with domestic abuse, and i will now be put in contact with a domestic violence support group called "The Golden House." IT'S OFFICIAL. I AM A RETROACTIVELY BATTERED WIFE. I half-expect him to offer me a bar of dark chocolate and a *Golden Girls* DVD. As a domestic abuse case, The State of Wisconsin will press charges—not me—and a mandatory no-contact order will be in place until i cancel it. *Sweet!* The cop photographs

my bleeding head and asks if i want to give a statement, adding that nothing i do or say will convince him not to press charges. "Not really" i say, turning my face to the unroll-downable window and listening to the Midwest Beat's set from the back seat of a cop car. *Well, at least i'm not in handcuffs heading to a hospital for a blood draw.* After what seems like an eternity of listening to this guy gabbing on his cop radio, he lets me out, hands me some paperwork, and asks if i have any questions. I have half a mind to ask him if, in light of recent events, i could get a pass on the whole drinking-and-driving thing for the remainder of the night. Somewhat wisely, i don't.

Love,
—Norb

BITE THE CACTUS
BY ADRIAN CHI
"SPOKENEST TOUR MAY '13"

OH SO MANY REASONS TO LOVE GOING ON TOUR - THE FOOD, THE FRIENDS, THE CITIES, THE ANIMALS, THE LANDSCAPES, THE WEIRD RADIO STATIONS... SURE IT'S TOTALLY EXHAUSTING AND STRESSFUL BUT AS SOON AS THE BANDS START PLAYING, IT'S ALL WORTH IT. SO THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HELPED US ON THIS!

WED 5-15 AT THEE YELL-OW ROOM, OAKLAND, CA

WITH WILD ASSUMPTIONS

AND ACID FAST

THURS 5-16 AT INTERZONE CAFE, CORVALLIS, OR.

YAY!!!

WITH BROWNTOWN

AND PENN'S WOODS BAND

FRI 5-17 AT HEARTLAND, SEATTLE, WA.

WITH STEVE ADAMK BAND!

ALSO DUDE WORK, THE CRAP AND NEEDLES/PINS

WED, SHOD... I LOVE PLAYING! I'M FROM... TO GO TO BUT... WAK A... I JUST... READ A... COME... MEET...

BITE THE CACTUS? NEAH... HOLY SHIT! THAT'S KUNESOME!

OH MY GOD! I'S SO COOL! YOU SEE GOIN' NEAR ME!

AND I MET AN ACTUAL FAN OF BITE THE CACTUS!!!

SAT 5-18 AT THE GLITTER DOME, PORTLAND, OR.

WITH FELDSPAR

SEE HERE

...DICKBINGE

AND FUCKING DYKE BITCHES

SUN 5-19 AT THE REDROOM, BOISE, ID.

WITH ROLLERSNAKES

SABATOGE! CHEERS!

THEN AN AFTERPARTY AT A BAR WHERE EVERYONE WAS SINGING ALONG TO EVERY SONG SUPER LOUD!

MON 5-20 AT BOING ANARCHIST COLLECTIVE IN SALT LAKE CITY, UT.

WITH JESUS CHRIST AND THE GOD DAMNS

HANDICAPITALIST

J.. JAWWZZ

AND THE NEXT DAY AN AMAZING TOUR OF THE CITY

BEST EVER! - NUM! - NUM!

SPACE JESUS

A SPINNY JOSEPH SMITH!

DELICIOUS! VEGAN LUNCH!

TUES 5-21 AT BRUCE CANYON, UTAH

NO SHOW-ONLY ROCKS, TREES, SKY AND MOUNTAINS

WED 5-22 AT CRACK SHACK, CEDAR CITY, UT.

WITH YEAR OF THE SUCK SNAKE

AND ARAGO'S WHEEL (FROM ITALY!)

THEN HOME - TO PLAY WITH A BALINESE GAMELAN GROUP AT THE LOU HARRISON HOUSE IN JOSHUA TREE

NOT WITH SPOKENEST, BUT WITH BURAT NANO!



Dan Monick's Photo Page
Cali, Los Angeles, 11/24/2012



**"He's playing
with a HOOK!
A HOOK!"**

Ruckus Roadie Militia

We lined up in front of the order counter at Guisados Tacos in Boyle Heights. It was the kind of place where you could watch them make your tortillas from scratch just moments before the other ingredients were piled on top. I've spent the last twenty-eight years in the foodservice industry so I was sort of geeking out on watching the staff skillfully assemble a seemingly endless flow of quite possibly the best Mexican food I'd ever eat. Back home in northern Wisconsin we are lucky to even get Tex-Mex cuisine. Usually, it's what some would call Wisc-Mex. It's tasty and it is food, but there is no comparison to what I was about to eat. It's funny—whenever I return to Wisconsin from Los Angeles and people ask me how my trip was, I always answer with a long diatribe about the amazing food.

Anyway, as I was saying, we lined up in front of the order counter at this Mexican restaurant. We were ten punk rockers well into a full-fledged Rhythm Chicken tour with five bonafide gigs already crossed off the day's list. Considering the circumstances, we should've been smiling, joking, jumping around, and precariously smirking like the cat that just ate the fifth canary. Boisterously rambunctious, however, we were not. We were rather subdued, quieted, and somewhat contemplative. You might even say all ten of us were in a collective funk. We needed something to shake us out of this unexpected moody downswing. The food was amazing. Our tummies were happy, but this black cloud of melancholy still loomed overhead. We were full, but we were still down.

While walking back to the van we passed a bench on the street corner. On this bench sat three very fancily dressed old guys, each one playing a large acoustic guitar. Somehow this quaint scene just seemed to fit the neighborhood and we all filed past the bench, mildly appreciating the old-guy guitar trio. Once back at the van a few of us commented on how cool the three fancy guitar guys looked, but we were still in this somewhat depressive funk. Something had to snap us back to slaphappy punk rock mode if this Rhythm Chicken tour were to continue. Something... anything.

All ten of us piled in and the van inched its way back to that very street corner with the guitar trio. Someone suggested that the Rhythm Chicken should join in and provide them with a chaotic backbeat, but I felt it might be taken the wrong way and I wished no disrespect to these fine old men. As we

pulled up to the corner, many of our faces were closely checking out the classy trio one last time, the colorful shirts, the fancy cowboy hats, the big cool-looking guitars, and then we saw it... THE HOOK!!! THE HOOK!!! The life-saving cheerleader of our group suddenly noticed that one of the men was plunking away at his guitar with a HOOK where his hand should be! Our cheerleader kept excitedly shrieking, "He's playing with a HOOK! A HOOK! He's playing with a HOOOOOOK!!!"

The black cloud was dissipating. We all cracked wry smiles. All it took was an old man playing guitar on a street corner with a hook for a hand and our spirits were reversed! Maybe it wasn't just the old man, or even his hook. Maybe it was our lively cheerleader whose overly ecstatic response was so infectious that we simply couldn't stay in a bad mood any longer. The negative mood brought on by the day's fifth gig could not and would not ruin our day! We had more crazed lunatic ruckus to bring to the L.A. streets, and we were once again fully of the mind to *bring it!* Saved by THE HOOK!!!

It was mid-March and I was a few weeks into my month-long vacation. I'd already spent a week with my parents in Florida, a short visit with the Ric Six clan in New Jersey, a few minutes at Joey Ramone's grave before flying from Newark to California, and now here I was ready to embark on the Rhythm Chicken's third cluckin' assault on the West Coast! This magazine's industrious editor had secured a sturdy Ruckus Transport Assault Vehicle and eight other eager punk rock helpers to create one heck-of-a Ruckus Roadie Militia. Special thanks go out to Noah, Dave, and Eric from Wreck Of The Zephyr for supplying us with the van. You will all receive plenty of radioactive birdseed in heaven!

**Dinghole Report #132:
Thirteen Chicken Gigs
Across L.A...and One Which
Shall, for the Time Being, Go
UNMENTIONED!!!
(Rhythm Chicken sightings
#644 to #647, and #649 to #657)**

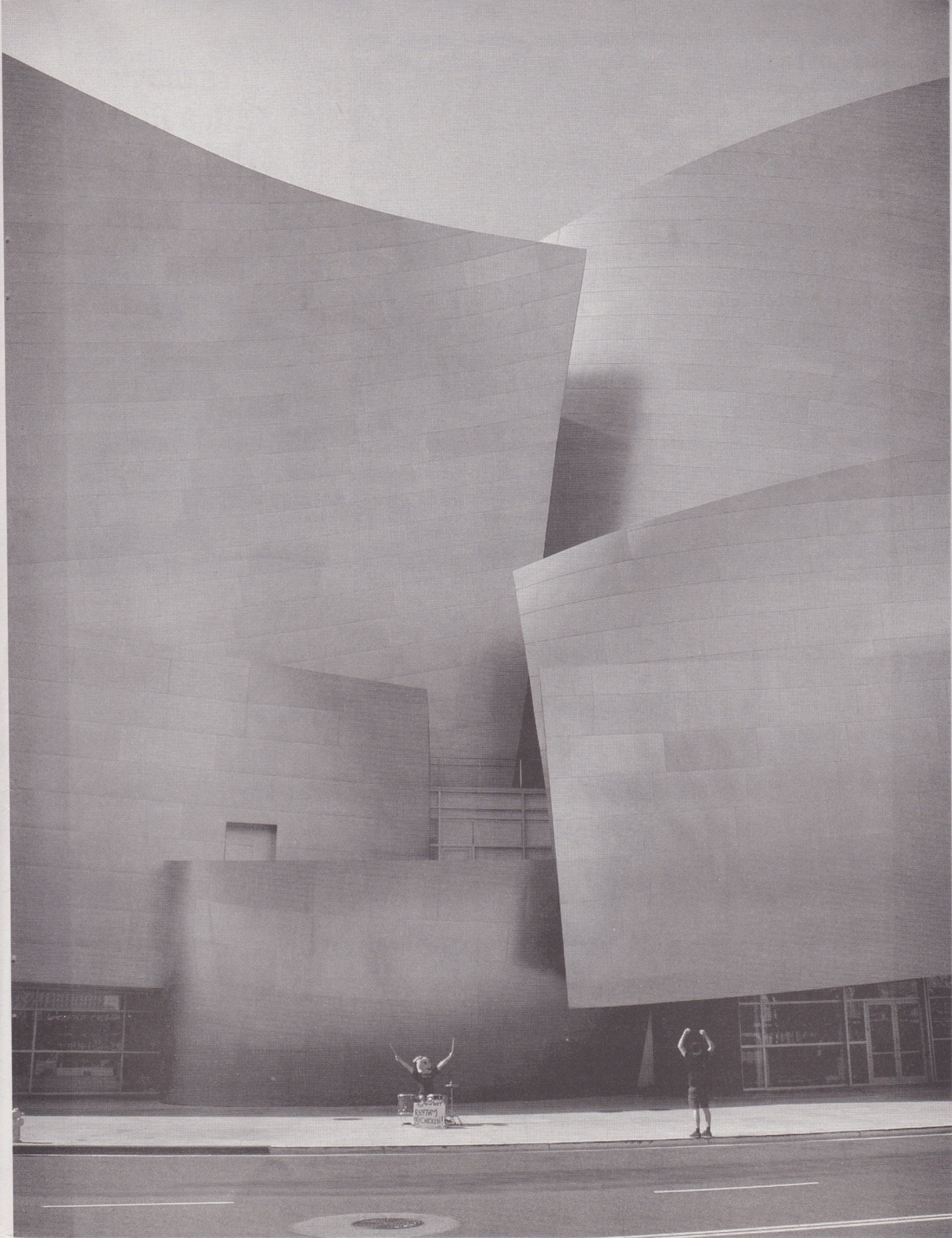
It was a full van. The Rhythm Chicken and his Ruckus Militia had squeezed in with a drumset and other various implements of agitation and documentation. Present were Todd Taylor, Daryl, Adrian Chi, Donna Ramone, Matt, Marcos, Jenn, Joe Dana, and Josh. The day's first gig was for two young children on Avenue 53 in Highland Park. Even though

they were decked out in Germs and Misfits T-shirts and punk rock checkerboard pants, once the Rhythm Chicken started banging out his Wisconsin-style ruckus on their back porch they were both clutching fast to Mommy and Daddy, not sure what to make of this strange, foreign punk rock. My chaotic ruckus rhythm must be losing its touch for there was no crying, so we took the show across the street. There we played to the neighbor's kids. They gazed at the zany chicken circus from behind the safety of their fence. When the horrendous ruckus-rock ceased and my wings were raised to the sky, they politely clapped and began to lose interest. Was I losing my touch?

Next we zoomed over to this large mural on Marmion Way and began setting up the chickenkit right on the side of the road with the colorful mural as a backdrop. I quickly started dispensing the thunder to passing cars and trucks that honked back occasionally. I wasn't sure if they were honks of joy or disapproval, but gosh-darnit THERE WERE HONKS! While quickly dismantling the kit, I heard a few cheers from the nearby apartment balconies and knew my message had been delivered. Before I knew it, we were setting up the chickenkit on the Greenway trailhead right next to the beautiful L.A. River! Such glamour! Such pomp and circumstance! I played my heart out right there, right next to the cement river. A few bikers passed by and barely seemed to notice. I pulled out my phone and called a friend back home so he could enjoy the historic riverside performance as well! I can always find an audience.

The next gig shall, for the time being, not be reported upon. Let's just say it put us all in a downer mood and made us hungry for some fine Mexican food, which then brought us to the HOOK! THE HOOK!!! Our spirits rebounded quickly enough and we soon found ourselves assembling the chickenkit up on the stage on the "skater side" of Mariachi Plaza. There were a dozen or so skaters tearing it up and doing their thing—that is until they were bludgeoned by the audio-visual steamroller known as the RHYTHM CHICKEN!! They stopped to check out the show for a few minutes, not quite sure if the RC was cool or not. Then a few of them clapped and a few others mustered up the courage to start whipping out the trickeroos in front of the show! SKATE ROCK!!!

The next stop was to be an area known as Little Tokyo. Upon arrival, we noticed how busy it was and excitedly started trying to set up the show in optimal high-profile





Christoph

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BOTH PHOTOS BY TODD TAYLOR

Some children dug the show, some moms did not.

locations. The security, however, was thick as pea soup and our first two attempts were skittled before they even began. Finally, we set up shop on the corner of 2nd Street and San Pedro, in front of two banks which were luckily closed on Saturdays. With the L.A. skyline as my backdrop, I pounded out some of my best anti-bank rock! I thought of all those denied loan requests from three years ago and just pounded HARDER and HARDER! Like a drumming spirit channel for Mojo Nixon, I stomped, pounded, and screamed. Various pedestrians calmly walked around me and into the crosswalk, oblivious to my rampant lunacy. Even the Little Tokyo security could've cared less at this point. WAS I LOSING IT?

In what appeared to me as being more like "downtown," we found Pershing Square. In the corner of the square we found a statue of Beethoven and set up shop at his feet. I sat at the chickenkit, pulled on my chickenhead, and started dispensing the chickenrock! The show was LOUD and gaining attention fast. Before long, security was walking our way and my military-precision militia had the kit torn down and exiting before they could get near.

The next show was directly in front of Disney Hall, a repeat gig from my first L.A. tour nine years ago! The performance was

starting to gain momentum as cars honked and pedestrians had second thoughts about walking too close to the action! Then when it seemed security would get the best of us, we bugged out again and our packed van was escaping towards the next venue! The show must roll on!

Once inside Griffith Park, we started searching for the mythical abandoned zoo. With chickenkit parts in hand, we hiked up the nearest mountain (I'm from Wisconsin, I can call it a mountain) in search of the holiest of photo-ops. We happened upon a bizarre little amphitheater. The stage was soon set. With my militia filling the seats, I waited for hikers to walk past and then thundered out my chaos-rock! **HIKERS TURNED AROUND AND WENT THE OTHER WAY!** I started feeling more successful! Later, we set up next to the carousel with a large number of children gathered around. Some children dug the show, some moms did not. Then we finally found the abandoned zoo in a hidden picnic area and the grandest stage of the day was taken! **I PLAYED IN THE LION'S DEN!!!** Its stoney caged-in structure looked like a cross between Dachau and the Flintstones! The lion's den was an immense echo-chamber and my thunder could NOT be ignored! Those who were pic-nicking had to

stop and pay heed to the chicken in the lion's den! It was glorious.

A quick gig occurred at Permanent Records in Eagle Rock. By this point, the Chicken's sad-looking rubber nose was dangling and about to fall completely off. We had to quickly squeeze in one more show! There was a Razorcake-hosted record spin at the Verdugo Bar in Glassell Park. My militia quickly hauled in the kit and before anyone could say "boo," the Chicken was rocking in the back room to the excited crowd of beer-drinking record listeners! The tour was officially done and I got to quickly chat it up with fellow Razorcakers Dale, Jimmy Alvarado, and Jeff Proctor. The day was a fun and joyous success, even *with the mysterious fifth gig*. I began depleting the Verdugo of its drinkables, Wisconsin-style.

The next day was St. Patrick's Day. I slept in, but then began brewing up two big pots of my famous Rhythm Chili. Razorcake HQ filled up with many staffers ready to test the vaporous magnitude of my blessed chili. The chili was eaten. The L.A. smog had a challenger in the morning. With every burning spoonful my mind kept creeping back to... **THE HOOK! THE HOOK!!!**

—Rhythm Chicken



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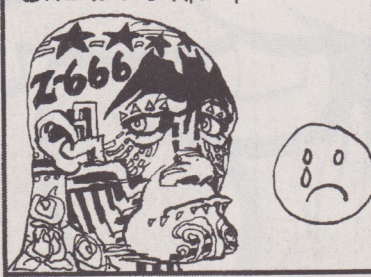
NEWS FLASH !!!

BY LUCKY "MILLION DOLLAR IDEA" NAKAZAWA

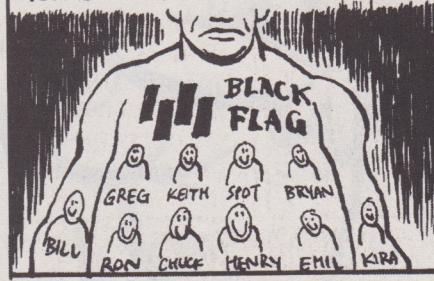
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DO YOU PLEASE YOURSELF BY COVER-
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ARE YOU RUNNING OUT OF PHY-
SICAL REAL ESTATE TO ILL-
USTRATE? BUMMER, RIGHT?



HOW WILL YOU FINISH THAT BLACK
FLAG TAT YOU STARTED IN 1980?
FOR SHAME.



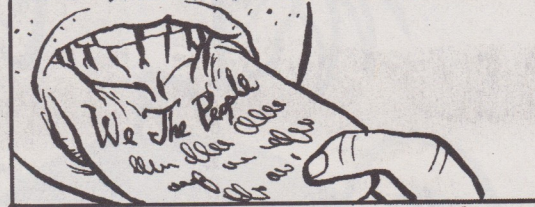
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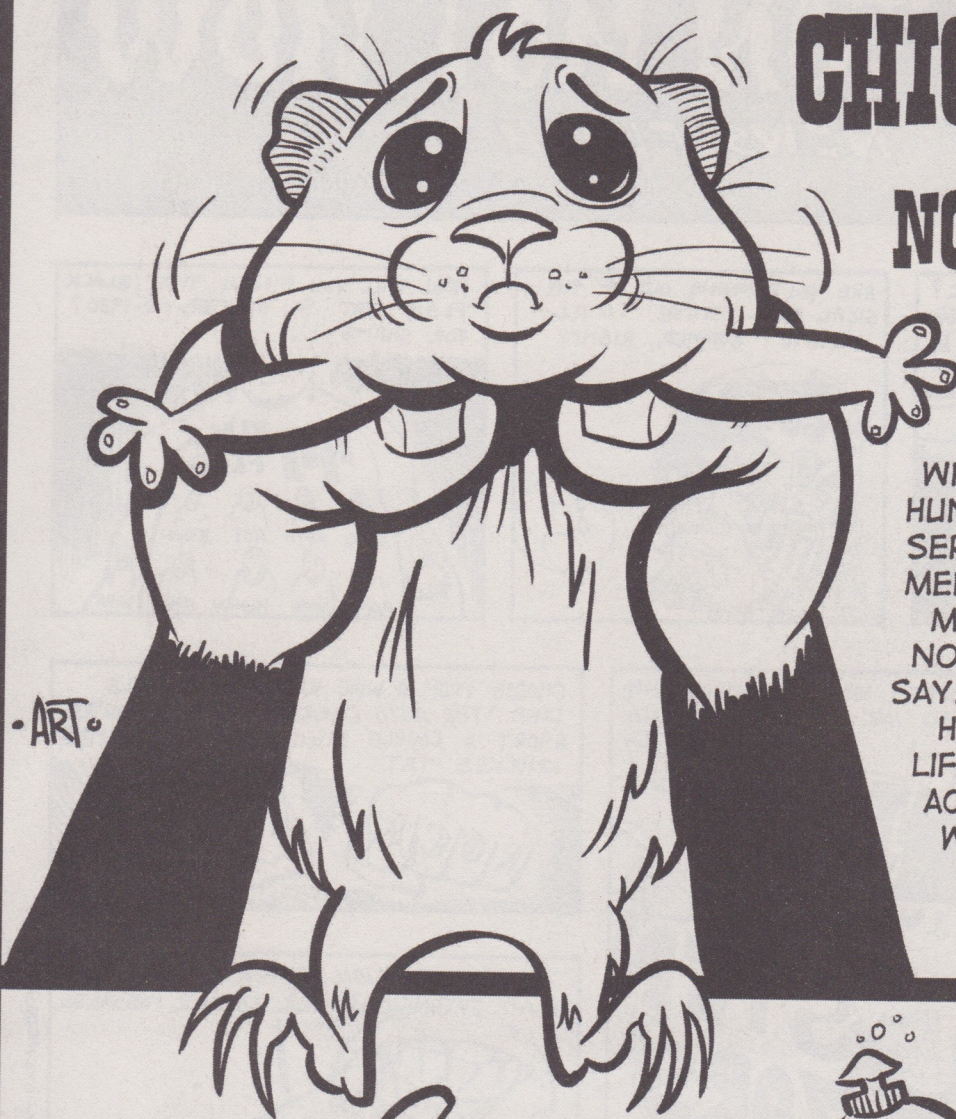
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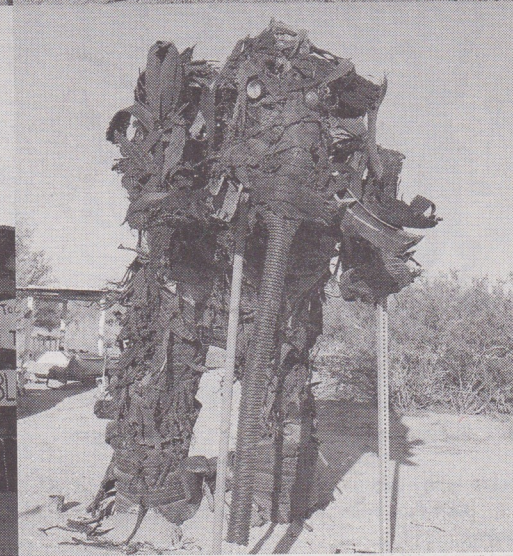
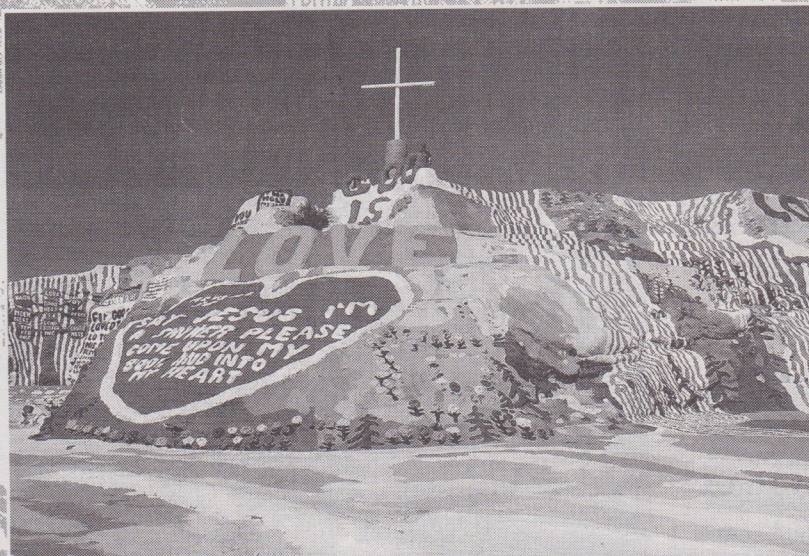


MEN HAVE SCALED
EVEREST, SWAM
THE ENGLISH
CHANNEL,
WRESTLED BEARS AND
HUNTED LIONS ON THE
SERENGETI. TO THESE
MEN I SAY, HA! THESE
MANLY DEEDS ARE
NOTHING! NOTHING, I
SAY! WHAT GREAT THING
HAVE I DONE IN MY
LIFE TO BELITTLE SUCH
ACCOMPLISHMENTS?..
WHY, NOTHING LESS
THAN...



...WASHED A
GREASY
GUINEA PIG
BUTT!





Rachel Murray Framingheddu's Photo Page

(Top row, l to r) Salvation Mountain and its sole creator Leonard Knight, eighty-one-years old. Visitors are encouraged to climb and explore the massive desert mountain. Featured in *Into the Wild*. (Second and third row) Four of the many large installations at East Jesus in Niland, CA.

THE TELEVISION

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No. 1 IN THE CAN

HEY! THAT'S MY
COPY OF DUDES
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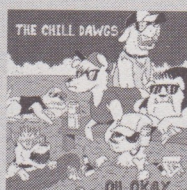
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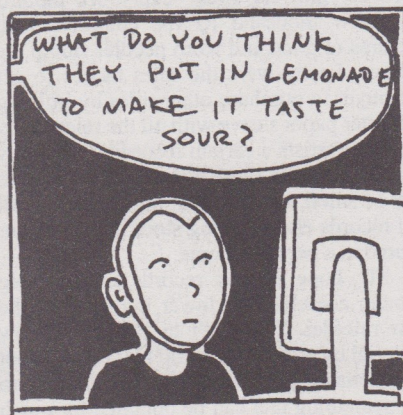
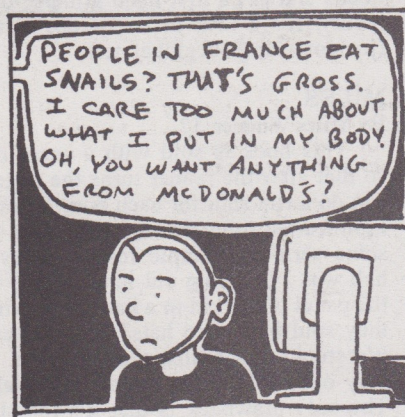
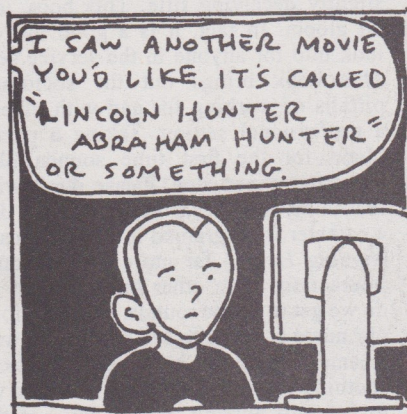
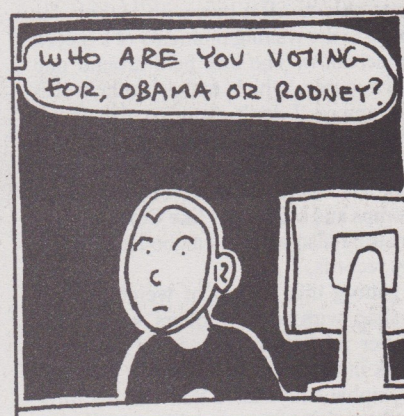
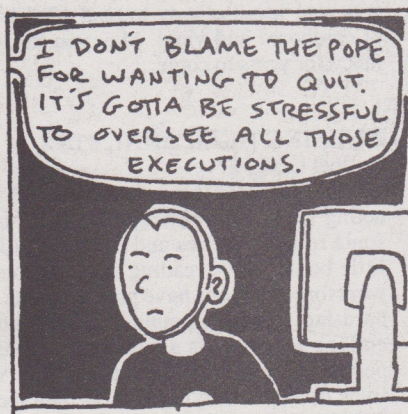
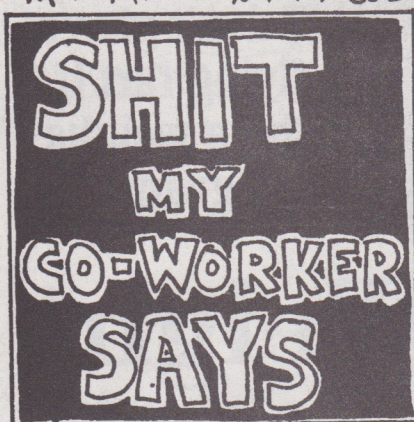
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SQUEEZE MY HORN

GARY HORNBERGER

"I don't give a flying fart if the thing weighs 180 grams."

This Burden of Weight

I ask our readers, are vinyl records a thing of the past?

I was able to fill a box with records for five bucks in the waning moments of a record swap meet/show. The box held around one hundred records, which makes them worth a nickel apiece. I can't even get that lucky with my comic book purchases. The records were oldies, a couple new wave bands, and a couple of '70s rock bands, but the oldies were comps and big names like Cole, Martin, and Sinatra. I also obtained a good amount of comedy records.

In getting this burden of weight, I also talked shop with some vendors who stated that earlier in the day they were gutted of early rock in a matter of seconds. In fact, one fellow emphatically stated that vinyl is fully on the rebound. I will state at this point that in going to shops recently and using the simple senses of sight and hearing, vinyl is making a big rebound, though I can't put my finger on whether it's for sheer listening enjoyment or collectability.

It could also be because one can get more bang for their buck. A used CD is six dollars. A used record is two bucks. While I was in record stores, on more than one occasion I overheard someone looking for a turntable, to no avail. I also see more people in the record bins than in the CD bins. At this point I can honestly say that most customers in a record store once again favor vinyl.

I'm not sure I'm one hundred percent in favor of the turnaround because of the new vinyl being released. I'm talking of the sealed records that are being sold for twelve to thirty dollars. I don't give a flying fart if the thing weighs 180 grams. I can still scratch it all to hell. I think an average of twenty bucks for a record that is most likely a re-release is absurd. In fact, I walked in the other day and saw a Mad Season record, the one with a black and white Pettibone-ish cover, for twenty some dollars. That CD never could sell for a couple dollars in a used bin at the Wherehouse/FYE. What the hell were they thinking? I also heard a kid state he wouldn't pay over ten dollars for a record just out of principle, and I sort of had to agree.

My purchases of vinyl recently are starting to go outside the realm of listening. A few older albums I have purchased recently were solely for the artwork or photo work on the covers. I particularly enjoy 10" records.

I must say Lena Horne and Eartha Kitt were pretty good looking in their days.

I'm still on the fence about a Stan Kenton record just for the cover. The cover is a barren landscape with colorful cones, cylinders, and blocks that remind me of when Homer went 3-D. The colors are much brighter on the old albums. They are very similar to the production differences of cover art on comic books when the bright tones of the sixties were replaced with the flat art of the seventies. Heck, almost any collectable paper product took a hit in production, even sports cards.

Along with the colorful covers is the interesting language that studios used to entice and convince the consumer that their product was the best, like "Capitol stereo—the full spectrum of sound." They actually have a visual of the audible sound spectrum. Dolton Records boasts, "visual sound stereo." Really? Back then one could see sound? Decca has "Hi-Fi Stereophonic records." Coral Records are "high-fidelity" and Mercury are "custom high-fidelity."

Visually, albums' designs are big and bold. When looking through bins, my eye always gets caught by RCA Victor's "living stereo" at the top of the cover. It's about an inch high and stretches across the top, wedged between two gold speakers that push colorful lines of music across and around the letters.

The inner sleeves of the albums are a kick too, with the sale tactics to buy new needles—like car tires—every six months or a few thousand RPMs, complete with pictures of good and worn needles riding the groove. Lastly were the sales tactics to get the buyer to purchase other titles by littering the inner paper sleeve with all the releases by the other artists a certain recording company owned. The only sense that was offended was that of smell, because it is my belief that all old records end up being stored near a water source in a person's home.

My hope is that records make a big enough comeback to lower the price of the new releases. That isn't to say that if new material by a band shows up that I won't foot a reasonable price, but to pay a snafu to get something that can be obtained for much cheaper is jerky. Collectability is when the production stops on an original and demand outweighs supply. Don't make me pay rare

record prices for something you churn out again and again every ten years. So here's to you, you lovable, easy-to-read 12" bundle of cardboard and vinyl. May you tickle my fancy for years to come.

NURSING HELL, MINI, #1&2

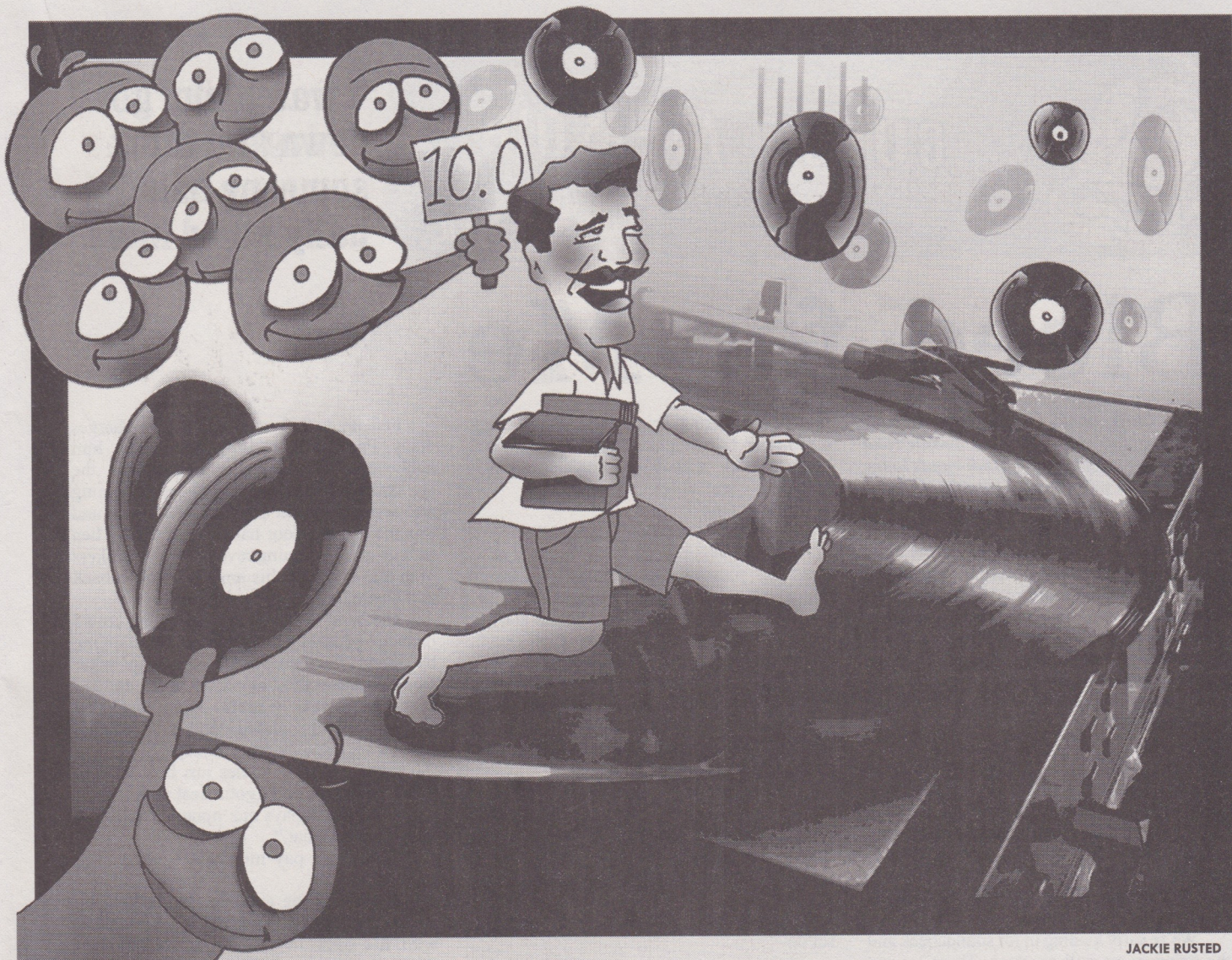
By Joel Craig, \$?

You want to be a nurse, right? That acting job wasn't paying the bills? Just do some rough sketches and explain it all in a little book. I love reading stories about the workforce. All jobs have pros and cons. The hard fact that was pounded into us during college was there is a miniscule amount of people who find all aspects of their work lives totally satisfying. So on that fact let me introduce *Nursing Hell*, a book with a slightly deceiving title. This book is not all gloom. In fact, it is a good mirror to look into for anyone in the service sector. This book brings out the sociological pitfalls of working for and with others in a professional setting. Taking a person's blood for the first time sounds like a traumatic experience. Please don't wiggle that in my arm. A far lighter look at doing a catheter is diagramed in these pages, yet *Nursing Hell* is far more focused on the interactions with other humans. Not only do we get to do the rounds, we get to follow our nurse at home to see how he blows off steam. I'm sure this book was cathartic and soothing for its author to write. If you want to get into nursing, find a copy of these books and get a first hand glimpse of the reality. It's a kick in the scrubs to read. (joeldonovan@sbcglobal.net)

MILES

By Miles Wintner, \$?

This book is sold with a snare drum so that after the reader turns the page, he can do a rim shot for each pun. *Miles* is a lighthearted romp through the world with some seriously simple insight. Why the hell was I laughing out loud when I read the panel of the kid in a hat shop asking if they sold backward hats? Why? Because it's stupid and realistic all at once. The play on words in this comic is priceless. The only drawback is that it's too short. Keep writing, Miles. You will conquer all our fears with laughter. (mwintner1@gmail.com)



JACKIE RUSTED

Collectability is when the production stops on an original and demand outweighs supply.

SET ME STRAIGHT #1

By Josue Quiquivi, \$?

Not sure if this is a cry for help. This one is very hard to read for such a short comic. The writing is difficult, despite drawings that are clean and crisp. Basically, there are two personal experiences written about here and neither is very deep in meaning. Please fill the next book with more. (josuequiquivix@yahoo.com)

DUMBASS DOG in SMELL THE ROSES

By Kevin Uehlein, \$??

This dog is no dumbass. In fact, he gets the job done. What is it about animals that

is so endearing? This short little comic is so much fun it should be animated, and that steroid-induced mouse should have its ass kicked on a regular basis. The full lengths of this title should be collected and cherished. Reading this one is like being a little kid watching Looney Tunes all over again. Acme anvil, please! (kevinuehlein.wordpress.com)

NIX COMICS QUARTERLY #5

By Various Writers, \$5.00 U.S.

By far one of the best books to cross my desk. Both the stories and the art kick ass. This book appeals to anyone who loves rock'n'roll and is into horror/suspense

movies. There are also a few funnies thrown in, to boot. Unfortunately, there was a note that stated the book didn't meet goals, so you readers need to hit the stores and ask to have this book on the ready because it will pound the ground with any of the DC or Marvel titles on cover art alone. The cover usually features some old rocker who made a deal with the devil. The color is so sharp that the book should be framed and hung, but read the great stories first. (nixcomics.com)

—Gary Hornberger



GUEST MEMOIR

PATRICK O'NEIL

"I watch him go down and think someone has finally killed him..."

Bleed for Me

My latest book project is a memoir portraying the years I was a roadie/road manager for several major punk bands in the '80s. I toured with Dead Kennedys, Flipper, TSOL, Subhumans, and even one mini-tour with The Dickies. I started out as a roadie and worked my way into head of the road crew, and then road manager, managing tours. That meant handling logistics, crews, merchandise, and bands. I was a strung out drug addict let loose in America, traveling the highways and ODing in motels. I caused mayhem and disorder in every city and club that crossed my path—it was a beautiful thing to behold.

The Showplace is a dump. But what else would you expect from a strip club in Dover, New Jersey that occasionally transforms itself into a music venue? I've been here before with T.S.O.L. so I know what to expect. Yet the forlorn interior and the dank stench of stale beer and cigarettes hits hard as I walk in the door.

We're early loading in for soundcheck and the strippers are still on stage. There are sad looking middle-aged women and meth-head biker mamas, showing cellulite, wrinkles, and stretch marks. Their old man is probably sitting in the dark somewhere in the audience, or at the bar, nursing a beer and a grudge. They are the same guys who are going to work the front door and be bouncers. The same guys who'll be backstage security, backing me up. We show up in our leather jackets, motorcycle boots, torn Levis, and black cut off T-shirts. And they're in roughly the same uniform, although in much larger sizes.

I step up to the bar, order a beer, and light a cigarette. The bartender tells me I can't run a tab.

"Just want a fuckin' beer," I say and hand her a twenty. She stares at me like I'm the worst scum she's ever seen, a pretty hard feat to achieve in a club like The Showplace. When she gives me my change I tip her a dollar and her expression softens.

The dude on the stool next to me is glaring at the half-naked woman hanging off a pole on the stage behind the bar. He's a big ass motherfucker with a mane of greasy black hair, an arm full of faded blue tats, and a leather vest with some obscure bike gang colors on the back. I drink my beer and watch the stripper spread her legs, straddle the pole, and grind into the steel phallic erection, her pink

rhinestone g-string shimmering in the stage lights. Her breasts poke straight up and out, perky, perfect—a boob job on an aging body.

"Don't look at 'er," says the biker.

"Excuse me?"

"That's my wife, don't look at 'er."

"This place is fuckin' unreal," I say to Chris Grayson, our soundman.

We're back stage. The show's started. It's packed. Not much happens in Dover, and a Dead Kennedys' show draws every punk kid in a fifty-mile radius. But we also bring in the occasional adventurer, angry nonconformists, skinheads, local weirdos, wannabe hipsters, and the usual assortment of the lost and disenfranchised.

"Never changes," says Chris.

We're both tired. Sleep hasn't been a priority. Touring the East Coast is easier. States are smaller. Venues closer. Drives shorter. But that still never seems to help.

The second band stops playing—time to set up.

Halfway through the set and it's the usual insanity. There's no air, it's hot as hell, the place is packed, and the crowd is pressing against the front of the stage. I'm over on Klaus's side, behind me there's a drop off into the passageway to backstage. There's no rail. Just a six-foot drop to the monitor board and cases of beer stacked along the wall. All the biker security dudes are there, watching the show, talking shit, drinking beer.

I toss a couple of stage divers off into the crowd. There's no fucking room and I'm conscious of falling off. I keep in close, behind the amps. When I turn around there's some thug grease-ball type standing on the side of the stage. He's screaming at the top of his lungs, doing an Al Pacino tough guy routine. In his hand is a folding knife he flicks open and then closes. I gesture to the closest biker and point to the guy. He just shrugs. Pacino dude is obviously crazy and these motherfuckers don't want to deal with him. They probably just let him walk on stage.

It's between songs and Biafra is talking his usual banter to the crowd. He's yelling, but this crazy Pacino dude is standing by the side-fills yelling louder and he doesn't even have a mic. I'd really like to get him off stage, but I'm not too happy about the knife the guy has. I've been stabbed before. That shit hurts and I'm gun shy.

Fed up with competing Biafra charges crazy Pacino dude and just shoves him backward off the stage down into the walkway. Dude doesn't even see it coming and seriously takes a fall six-feet down and hits the cement floor hard with a thud. Then he's up and screaming revenge and the bikers grab him and twist his arms behind his back and hustle him out the side door.

The band starts the next song, the crowd unaware of what just happened. I'm hanging by Klaus' bass amp when the huge biker from earlier at the bar comes up to me and leans into my ear. "Careful loadin' out. That 'lil guy's fuckin' pissed. Gonna be gunnin' for you'se, throwin' 'em off stage."

"Hey, can't you dudes just beat the shit outta him so we don't gotta deal with it?"

"They don't pays me 'nough ta mess wit fuck-wads like dat."

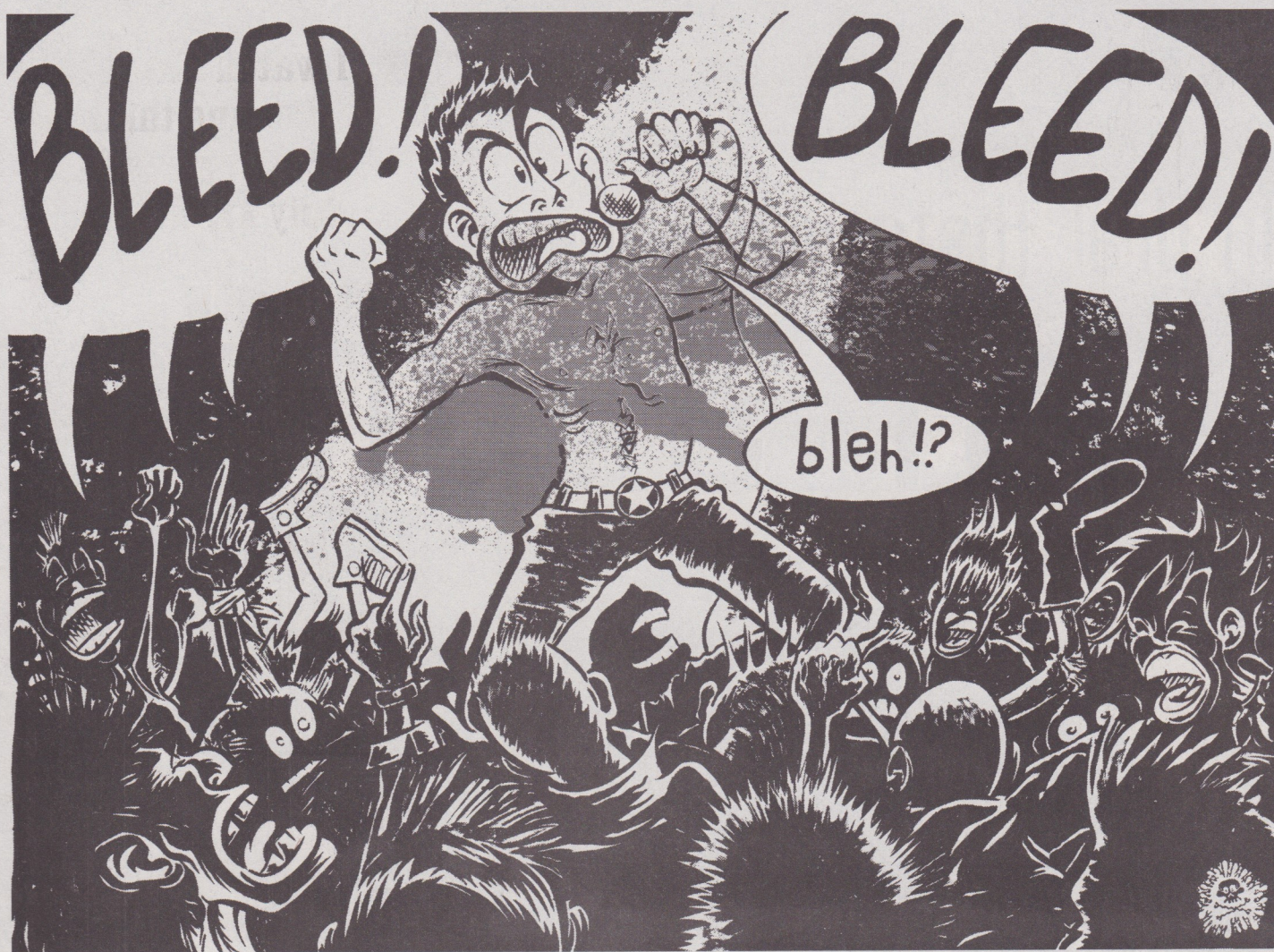
They don't pay me enough either, I'm thinking.

Biafra's in the audience being held up above the crowd, kneeling on shoulders, with his back to the stage. He's arched upward, under a glaring white stage light, the mic held above his head as he screams the chorus:

*C'mon bleed
C'mon bleed
C'mon bleed
Bleed for me*

A spray of blood red liquid splatters over and off of Biafra, dousing the ceiling and those around him. A teenage girl screams, her hands touch her face that's covered in red liquid. There's panic and pandemonium, the crowd parts, everyone immediately around Biafra is drenched. I watch him go down and think someone has finally killed him. That fucking crazy Pacino dude stabbed Biafra. He's fucking dead.

I glance over at Klaus. He's staring wide-eyed, but hasn't stopped playing. We're both thinking the same thing. I leap into the crowd to find out what the fuck is going on. Biafra is making his way to the stage. He's shirtless and covered in thick, red liquid that eerily resembles blood. I ask if he's all right? He looks stunned and ignores me. Then I remember he's not wearing his contacts and can't see a thing. But I don't see any obvious wounds. So I follow him through the crowd.



ALEX BARRETT

That fucking crazy Pacino dude stabbed Biafra. He's fucking dead.

The show is over.

A woman who works in a hospital, or maybe it was a friend of hers, brought a plastic blood transfusion bag to the show waiting for the right moment to present itself—the ultimate punk act—spray Biafra with blood while he sings “Bleed for Me.”

Crazy Pacino dude isn't around. He's no longer at the show. When he became so out of control that he tried attacking the bikers out in front of the club, they finally perceived him as a threat and six of them took turns stomping him into the ground. They're all grumbling about missing the show, after hearing about Biafra getting doused with blood.

Giant biker dude finds me on stage packing up the gear. Tells me not to worry about crazy dude.

“Took care a dat,” he says.

I want to say, “Why didn't you do that right from the beginning?” But I decide to just be grateful I'm not stuck dealing with him by myself out in the dark parking lot.

The New Jersey State Police have set up roadblocks on every main road leading out of Dover. Our motel is in the next township, a few miles away. All the crew has been drinking and doing drugs. There's no way we can pass a sobriety test. East Bay Ray says he's good, he's only had one beer, and offers to drive. The whole crew and band gets in the U-Haul rental truck, which is something that rarely ever happens, and we take off. Five minutes later we're at the roadblock and a trooper is asking Ray if he's been drinking and Ray says no. The trooper asks him to recite the alphabet backwards.

“I couldn't do that even if I hadn't been drinking,” says Ray.

The cop laughs and lets us through.

—Patrick O'Neil

Patrick O'Neil writes nonfiction, plays music, and makes short documentary films. During the '80s he was a roadie and road manager for Dead Kennedys, Flipper, Subhumans (UK) and T.S.O.L. Patrick was a heroin addict for eighteen years, a bank robber for three, incarcerated for two and a half, did three and change in residential drug rehabs, worked as a substance abuse counselor for six, and has been clean for the last twelve. His memoir Hold-Up was published by 13e Note Editions and he currently teaches at a community college to students whose idea of literature is a text message.

Visit him at: patrick-oneil.com



RAZORCAKE 33

An Oral History of the Lost Sounds



Three promising Memphis garage rock musicians—Alicja Trout, Jay Reatard, and, Rich Crook—came together in 1999 to form the Lost Sounds. What followed over the course of their six-year run helped broaden the genre of garage rock through the Lost Sounds' experimentation and a disregard for convention.

Alicja Trout had already gained recognition around Memphis for her stint in the short-lived group The Clears (1997-1998). Influenced by krautrock and synth punk, The Clears were a logical precursor to Lost Sounds. Eighteen-year-old Jay Reatard was a less likely candidate for Lost Sounds. The figurehead behind the Reatards—one of the most chaotic garage rock bands of the late '90s—Jay's foray into synth punk was unexpected. His move from The Reatards to Lost Sounds also brought drummer Rich Crook.

Lost Sounds' early recordings were rooted in garage rock. Tasteful covers like The Lollipop Shoppe's "You Must Be a Witch" and "Frankenstein Twist" were part of the band's early set (the former appeared on their first full length *Memphis Is Dead*). Synths and metal elements—not to mention odd song structures

and lyrics about pandemic disease—set the Lost Sounds apart from the crowd. From the start, Lost Sounds was pretty far removed from The Standells.

Like Roxy Music, they were big on ideas. Technical ability wasn't a prerequisite. Jay couldn't play keys and Rich might have been more comfortable on guitar than drums. None of that mattered. Hard work and self-sufficiency paid off. The band recorded itself and Alicja provided the band's album art.

By 2001, Empty Records picked up Lost Sounds for two stunning records, *Black Wave* (2001) and *Rat's Brains and Microchips* (2002). With each successive album, the group grew as musicians with Alicja and Jay switching off on guitar and keys. The two also improved their production skills. The last Lost Sounds LP was recorded on a digital 24-track recorder and, by the end of the band's run, few elements of garage rock remained.

Lost Sounds were known for their live shows. An anxiety filled Jay Reatard couldn't stand a moment's hesitation between songs. (I caught Lost Sounds in 2004 and it remains the most intense live show I've witnessed.) Alicja recalled their set being "forty-five minutes of brutality" and that's no lie.

Alicja and Jay dated for several years, but the relationship had dissolved by the time Larry Hardy signed Lost Sounds to In The Red. Despite the group's solid EP (*Future Touch*) release and an amazing self-titled full length, Lost Sounds didn't outlast the breakup. After a horrible European tour (their last show was in Germany), Lost Sounds abruptly ended in 2005.

Jay Reatard went on to have a fairly successful solo career. He was incredibly driven, abrasive, and mercurial making it all the more rare that someone with Jay's makeup and talent found even a modicum of financial success in music.

Jay passed away in 2010. He was only twenty-nine years old.

Eight years after their breakup, a review of Lost Sounds' career is long overdue. Much has been made of Jay Reatard's solo work, but it wasn't the genesis of his career. Jay spent more time in Lost Sounds than he did in any other band and grew as a musician. He also learned to record, master, and produce albums in the process. He, arguably, recorded his best work with Alicja and Rich. Inarguably, he grew not only as a musician but as a producer. He couldn't have recorded and played all of the instruments on *Blood Visions* (2006) himself without the experience he gained in Lost Sounds.

When Lost Sounds is mentioned in the press it's not uncommon for Alicja and Rich to be overlooked. Although Alicja Trout has kept a lower profile, she's remained incredibly productive, playing in River City Tanlines, Mouserocket, and Black Sunday. Alicja has been a pillar of the Memphis garage rock scene for more than fifteen years. Without her contributions, Lost Sounds wouldn't have been the genre-defying and influential band it came to be. (Both The Intelligence and UV Race count Lost Sounds as an influence.) Rich Crook proved to be an incredible drummer with Lost Sounds. Crook had the constitution required to put up with Jay's fits and to interpret Alicja's early abstract songs. Rich went on to form Lover! (with Greg Roberson) and is currently playing in Thing.

Interview by Ryan Leach | Photos by Canderson | Layout by Daryl

Interviewees

Alicja Trout: Songwriter, vocalist, guitarist, and keyboardist in Lost Sounds. Also played in The Clears, CC Riders, Nervous Patterns, Destruction Unit, and Black Sunday. Currently in The River City Tanlines and Mouserocket. Releases solo material under Alicja-Pop.

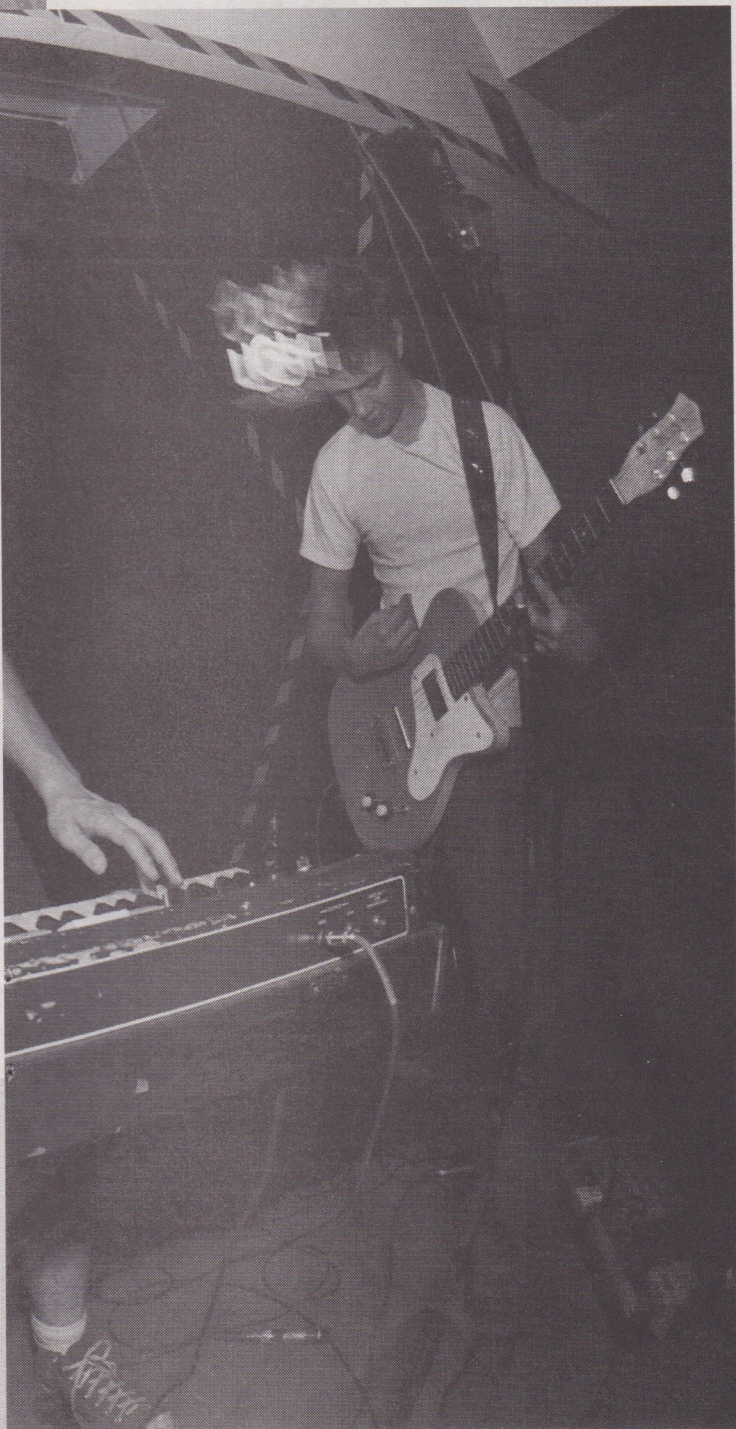
Rich Crook: Drummer in Lost Sounds. Played in The Reatards, Naughty Knights, and Lover! Currently in Thing.

Ryan Rousseau: Lost Sounds touring bassist. Played in The Wongs and The Reatards. Is in Digital Leather, Earthmen And Strangers, Tokyo Electron, and Destruction Unit.

Federico Zanutto: Ran Solid Sex Lovie Doll Records.

Meghan Smith: Worked at Empty Records.

Larry Hardy: Owner of In The Red Records.



WE BOTH LIKED TO DRINK VODKA IN
THE KITCHEN AND MAKE NOISE.
WE DIDN'T HAVE MUCH OF AN
OBJECTIVE AT THE BEGINNING.



Referenced

Jay Reatard (1980-2010): Songwriter, vocalist, guitarist, and keyboardist in Lost Sounds. Also played in The Eunuchs, The Reatards, Nervous Patterns, CC Riders, Destruction Unit, Final Solutions, Angry Angles, Terror Visions, and had a successful solo career.

Patrick Jordan: Played bass and guitar on Lost Sounds' self-titled record.

John Garland: Played bass in Lost Sounds.

John Acosta: Played bass in Lost Sounds.

Jon Kirksey: Played cello on *Rat's Brains and Microchips*.

The Reatards and The Clears

Ryan: What bands were you in before Lost Sounds?

Rich: I moved to Memphis in the summer of 1997. I met Jay and started playing with him in The Reatards in '98. I played guitar first. But The Reatards were like The Oblivians; we all switched instruments. I played drums on the *Grown Up Fucked Up* (1999) record. That sort of solidified me as a drummer in Memphis.

Alicja: The Clears lasted about a year. We were around in '97 and '98. I liked the music we were playing. Others did too, but it really wasn't what I wanted to be doing. I wanted to do something a little more rock'n'roll. I wasn't into Kraftwerk. I only found out about that stuff (krautrock) because everyone kept referencing our band to it. We dressed up silly and robotic in The Clears. That was our look. We'd go into the hootchie momma stores in the mall and buy shiny plastic clothes off the close-out racks. We really weren't trying to imitate Kraftwerk or Devo. One of the guys in the band just happened to have a ton of analog keyboards.

Formation of Lost Sounds

Ryan: Lost Sounds formed in 1999, correct?

Alicja: We might have started in 1998. Jay and I became friends. We started making kitchen recordings in '99. I was into keyboards. I had everything from analog keyboards to cheap Casios I'd pick up at the thrift store. Jay was known for being in The Reatards. He was also an amazing 4-track recorder. Later on he became great at working on 8-track, 16-track and 24-track recorders.

In the late '90s, there were a lot of bands trying to get that Farfisa sound. Real '60s. We didn't have a Farfisa so we used a Roland String synthesizer. It sounded like a cloudy symphony. We'd put that through an overdrive pedal. Jay and I just wanted to see what we'd get out of it. We both liked to drink vodka in the kitchen

and make noise. We didn't have much of an objective at the beginning.

I knew The Clears wasn't my end-all, be-all band. I think Jay felt the same way about The Reatards. The Reatards was a way for Jay to show his love for The Oblivians and garage rock, but he was into a lot more stuff. He liked Devo a lot. At some point, Jay picked up a *Screamers 7"*. "Punish Or Be Damned" was on it. The Screamers seemed to get rediscovered around the time we formed Lost Sounds. Ryan (Rousseau), from Destruction Unit and The Wongs, was discovering the bands on the Red Snerts compilation (a record compiling early '80s synth punk). It sounded like the direction we wanted to take Lost Sounds into. Jay was so comfortable with garage rock. Although he was a Devo fan, he was a little uncomfortable using analog keyboards.

Rousseau: I'd play The Screamers for Jay. *Hardcore Devo*, too. I had that collection on a Ryko CD. That shit was wild. Jay and I were into the same kind of stuff. We wanted to rock the fuck out. We've always been into similar music. I got Jay into Faust, too. Later on, he got me into Flying Nun (an independent New Zealand label).

Alicja: Lost Sounds was a mixture of Jay's personality and my own. Rich Crook was less paranoid. He fit in because he was tough and could take whatever came his way. All of our free time would be spent experimenting. Jay and I liked jumping around with sound. If we made one song one day, we'd make another one that sounded completely different the next. That's why Lost Sounds sounds so different from The Reatards and The Clears. We also jumped around on different albums. By the time we were on *In The Red*, we had the double-stack keyboards.

Rich: Jay and I knew Alicja. I had a crush on Alicja. Little did I know, Jay did too. He was going out with another girl at the time. I had made Reatards T-shirts for the European tour we were going on with The Persuaders. We left in January of '99. I wanted to give Alicja a T-shirt. I told Jay, "Hey, before we hit the interstate, let's stop at Alicja's house so we can give her one of these T-shirts." I really wanted to impress her. "Hey, we're off to Europe. Here's a T-shirt!"

During that time Jay and Alicja were forming a relationship so I had no chance with her in a romantic way. They had made a two-song demo. They said they were forming a new wave band. I'm not sure if Jay had a place to stay when we got back from Europe. He might have moved in with Alicja by then. Not long afterwards, he asked me if I wanted to play in Lost Sounds.

I was very excited to be in Lost Sounds. Although I had given up on forming a romantic relationship with Alicja, I still really wanted to be in a band with her. Jay definitely had his sights on her. Alicja was great in The Clears and Jay recognized that. At that point, Jay was just the kid down the street I'd pick up and rescued from the fight he was having with his stepdad. I always saw

Jay as a little kid. I was four or five years older than him and Alicja was older than me. Jay got lucky with Alicja. I'd just scratch my head when I'd think about it. It didn't bother me at all because I could tell early on that Lost Sounds would likely turn out awesome. I was happy to be part of the ride.

Ryan: Could Jay play keyboards when Lost Sounds started?

Alicja: Not at all. It was a good thing because Jay was a better guitarist than me but I could play keyboards. Of course, it wasn't so good when I switched to guitar, but it made us work harder at the instruments we were weaker at.

Rousseau: Jay felt like he was really progressing with Lost Sounds. We were all getting into other types of music. We couldn't only play punk. We wanted to do other stuff.

First 7": "Plastic Skin" EP on Solid Sex Lovie Doll (2000)

Ryan: Federico Zanutto at Solid Sex Lovie Doll released the first Lost Sounds 7". It always amazed me how on the pulse of underground American music his Italian label was. Do you remember how you made contact with him for the 7"?

Alicja: I think Federico wanted to do something with The Reatards. Jay told him, "Well, I'm doing this other band now called The Lost Sounds. Want to release our first 7"?" The internet wasn't really prominent at that time. There wasn't any way for him to know about it otherwise.

Federico: At the time, I was listening to a lot of American bands and The Reatards were one of my favorites. I didn't know about the existence of Lost Sounds. When I approached Jay, I think I contacted him by e-mail, asking if he wanted to release a Reatards single on my label. He replied that he had just started a new band called Lost Sounds and had recorded some songs with them. If I wanted to, I could release those songs. I told him, "Of course."

Ryan: "Plastic Skin," "What I'd Say," and "Lost and Found" show up on that 7".

Alicja: Those are the '99 kitchen recordings Jay, Rich, and I did. We were just forming our sound then.

Federico: They sent me a tape. I preserved it because it meant a lot to me. Recently, Alicja asked me if I could send her the tape for the Goner re-press of the single. She kindly sent it back to me, as she knew how much I valued it.

Rich: I was excited about the first 7". Up until then I had only played on the *Grown Up Fucked Up* album with The Reatards. We all had a hand in the record—although Jay and Alicja more so because they wrote the songs. They brought me demos of the songs on cassette. That helped out a lot. We recorded the record in a back room of a house that Alicja had bought. The fact that it was coming out on an Italian label was cool.

First LP: *Memphis Is Dead* released on Big Neck Records (2001)

Ryan: Had you done much touring before you released *Memphis Is Dead*?

Alicja: We had only really played in the South by that point. Oxford (Mississippi), Jackson, and New Orleans. We had gone up to Chicago, too. Maybe Milwaukee. But we hadn't done too many out-of-town shows.

Ryan: Did you do the cover art for *Memphis Is Dead*?

Alicja: Yeah. The cover photo is a French castle with some imagery from the film *Shoot the Moon*.

Ryan: The back cover says it was recorded at "This Ain't Easley's Studios." Did you and Jay record the album yourselves?

Alicja: That was what Jay called his studio. It's so funny. At the time, Jay thought Easley's studio was posh and pretentious. Doug's studio was anything but that. The Easleys were the nicest guys. Their studio became hip for a while. Jay was looking at the world through his teenager's viewpoint. I thought, "Whatever. I'd be happy to record with Easley."

Rich: The Baseball Furies were on tour in Memphis. Jim (McCann) from the Baseball Furies stayed at Alicja's house. Lost Sounds didn't end up playing with them that night. I think The Reatards did. We asked Jim if he wanted to hear the Lost Sounds recordings we had made. Once he heard it, he flipped out and said, "I want to put this record out!" He called his friend Bart (Hart) from Big Neck. After a couple of weeks, Bart said, "Yeah, let's get started." We recorded that whole record in a basement of a house that Alicja's friend owned. Alicja just rented a room. She had her recording studio down there, which was just a reel-to-reel. It was pretty basic. If you listen to it now, the drums sound like shit. There was nothing to that recording. It was bare bones. We were a total garage band recording in a basement.

Ryan: *Memphis Is Dead* is an angry record. "Satan Bought Me" is on there. There are also some garage-influenced tracks that made up part of your early sound, like "I've Lost It" and the Lollipop Shoppe cover ("You Must Be a Witch").

Alicja: I was lucky that I found Jay and Rich. I brought really strange songs to the band. Jay and Rich had never recorded anything like "Satan Bought Me" before. They gave it a shot. My brain doesn't go to those places anymore. "Satan Bought Me" slaughtered my voice. It sounds scary and, at the time, I thought like that. I didn't want to sing the song live after a while.

When I wrote it, (George W.) Bush had just been elected and there was a feeling that the United States would be turning really conservative. Everyone felt that the four horsemen of the apocalypse were coming. It was a scary time. I remember hearing things about bar codes, that bar codes were everywhere and taking over. Mix that with no responsibility in my life outside of showing up to work and paying rent, I'd just let my

mind wander. Someone was telling me all these theories about the symbolism in the dollar—that kind of stuff. I remember thinking, "Yikes!" A short time later I figured there was no way anything that calculated could take place.

Rich: I respected Alicja so much. I thought she could do no wrong. I felt so fortunate and lucky to play with her. I still think she has it all. I just wanted to be a part of it. Whatever she threw at me I was going to work with.

Ryan: Did the psychogeography of Memphis impact Lost Sounds?

Alicja: Absolutely. It's a city where you don't always feel safe. There's a lot of poverty here. You have to have a sense of humor about it. Jay and I internalized events around us and took them very personally. I don't do that as much anymore.

Second LP: *Black Wave* released on Empty Records (2001)

Rich: Jay had formed a relationship with Empty before we went to Europe with The Reatards.

Meghan: Empty released *Grown Up Fucked Up* by The Reatards. Not long afterwards, Jay called me up and said he was doing a side project with Alicja called Lost Sounds. I didn't know Alicja then. Prior to Lost Sounds, I spoke with Jay a lot. Jay said Lost Sounds was releasing a full length (*Memphis Is Dead*). I asked him why he didn't give us the option of putting it out. Jay said I wouldn't like the record. I told him to let me be the judge of that and to send me the new tracks they were working on. Empty ended up doing the next two full lengths (*Black Wave* and *Rat's Brains and Microchips*). All told, Empty put out more records by Jay than any other label.

Ryan: Alicja and Rich mentioned that Jay was the one contacting record labels.

Meghan: Jay loved to talk. E-mail wasn't his strongest thing. Jay didn't have a ton of schooling. When he did that first 7" (with The Reatards), he took it to school and the music teacher said, "Great. Bring us something we can play on CD." Jay walked away from that thinking *fuck you*. Although Jay didn't have a lot of schooling, he was extremely smart. He wasn't book smart. When you're in school, that can be difficult. He had a ton of energy and wrote a lot of songs. He threw a lot of them away. He had that talent. Jay was an easy person to hang out with when he was in a good mood. I talked with him more than any other person in my adult life.

Ryan: *Black Wave* is a double LP. That's a lot of money to ante up for a release.

Meghan: We never told bands what they could or couldn't do. If a double LP is what you created, that's what we were going to put out. It wasn't a big deal. We only were concerned with whether the record was good. It's a very complete record. I love vinyl but *Black Wave* works well as a CD.

Ryan: *Black Wave* has one of my favorite Lost Sounds songs on it, "Ocelot Rising."

Alicja: "Ocelot Rising" doesn't have very many lyrics. It was a song that would have

typically ended up as a home recording, never to be released. Again, Jay and Rich were willing to try different things. That song helped me discover that it's easier to play songs that are loud and fast as opposed to slow. People would request "Ocelot Rising," but we'd feel uncomfortable playing it. We were usually feeling so anxiety-ridden. It was hard to play mellow.

Rich: *Black Wave* was recorded at The People's Temple. At that point, Jay and Alicja were not living together anymore. Jay was staying with some of the guys in The Oscars. They lived in this big warehouse close to Sun Studios on Union Avenue in Memphis. They called it *The People's Temple*. It was a punk rock collective. They'd host shows and parties there. We recorded all of the music on *Black Wave* on the second floor of that building.

Ryan: Would you guys collaborate on songs?

Alicja: We would write songs individually. I would try to get my ideas across to the other members of the band. Sometimes Jay and Rich would add their own touch and do something different. The cover art for *Black Wave* shows us getting attacked by some atomic rays in the city. It's supposed to be scary. But we were also using humor. We might have sounded serious, but we didn't perceive ourselves that way. Jason ("Panzer" Craft) from The Persuaders said, "You guys are like black metal and new wave." He came up with the name for our music: black wave. We thought it was funny. That's where the name for the record came from.

Ryan: The cover of *Black Wave* has a really endearing photo of Jay on it. He's running with a mini-keyboard, sort of crouched. He's really young and healthy.

Alicja: He's sort of giggling, too. Jay was a giggly guy. He'd get drunk and his voice would get really Southern sounding. He wasn't always the dude with the raspy voice, looking to beat you up. He would shoot bottle rockets out of his ass at parties to make people laugh.

Meghan: Lost Sounds did the cover art for *Rat's Brains* at Empty's office while they were on tour. I remember Blake (Wright, head of Empty) was gone that day. The fight that ensued between Jay and Alicja was pretty ridiculous. It's a great cover but they had a seven-hour argument about it. They fought over every aspect of it. I would try to walk away from the two of them. Jay would pull me back into the argument. That was Jay's personality coming through. Alicja wasn't like that.

Alicja: I think people got excited about Lost Sounds little by little. There was a steady growth. By the time we got on In The Red, anyone with their ear to the ground knew who we were. Girls were interested in the band, possibly because there was a girl in Lost Sounds. Jay's fans were interested. Of course, some of them—who liked The Reatards—didn't like Lost Sounds. People into keyboards liked Lost Sounds.

Rousseau: I was so excited when I got to play bass on their first West Coast tour. I had the van. I think Jay and Alicja rode to Phoenix on

a bus. It took them like five days. Horrible. It was right when *Black Wave* came out. Our show was half *Memphis Is Dead*, half *Black Wave*. I thought *Black Wave* was amazing.

Live Shows

Ryan: Was Jay the catalyst that got you going live?

Alicja: Jay was a catalyst. He was terribly high strung. Jay had an abnormal level of anxiety. It was unhealthy. I came from a family that had an unhealthy level of anxiety, so dealing with it was normal for me. You get accustomed to playing shows as an endorphin rush. You only get that way by screaming and letting yourself go.

We weren't always having a good time playing. There would be times where everything was going great and then it'd be like, "Shit, Jay's freaking out again." He'd be yelling at someone or freaking out about something. It wasn't all the time. To this day, I don't like playing quiet shows. But I definitely don't want to go back to the days of singing "Satan Bought Me." I just don't have that much anxiety any more. It might be part of getting older.

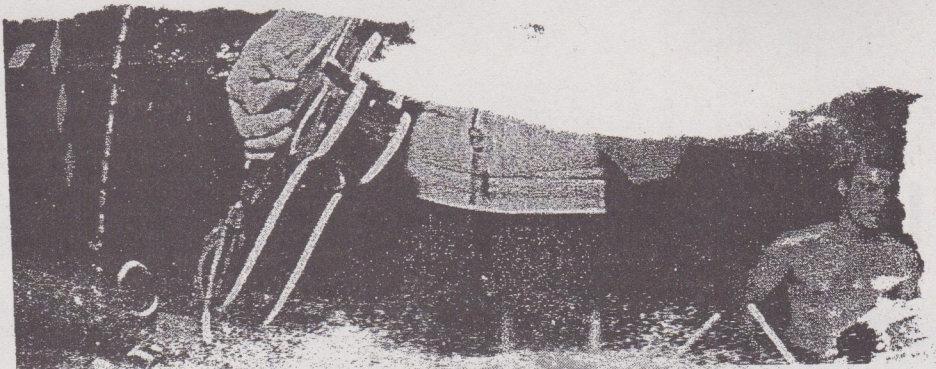
Jay had no tolerance for people messing up. Rich and I had the same internal feeling, but we wouldn't let it out like Jay did. As a group, we functioned well because we all wanted to get the job done. We'd occasionally have a fourth person in the band who was the easy-going personality. With John (Garland), Patrick (Jordan), or John (Acosta), it was a case of thinking, "Okay, we can only take it so far before they start freaking out."

Rich: Jay's anxiety was awful, awful, awful. You could feel it ten feet away. Nobody wanted to make him angry. When Jay got angry, the tour could be canceled or he'd decide that he didn't want to get in the van that night. The list of complaints, threats, and demands just mounted over the years.

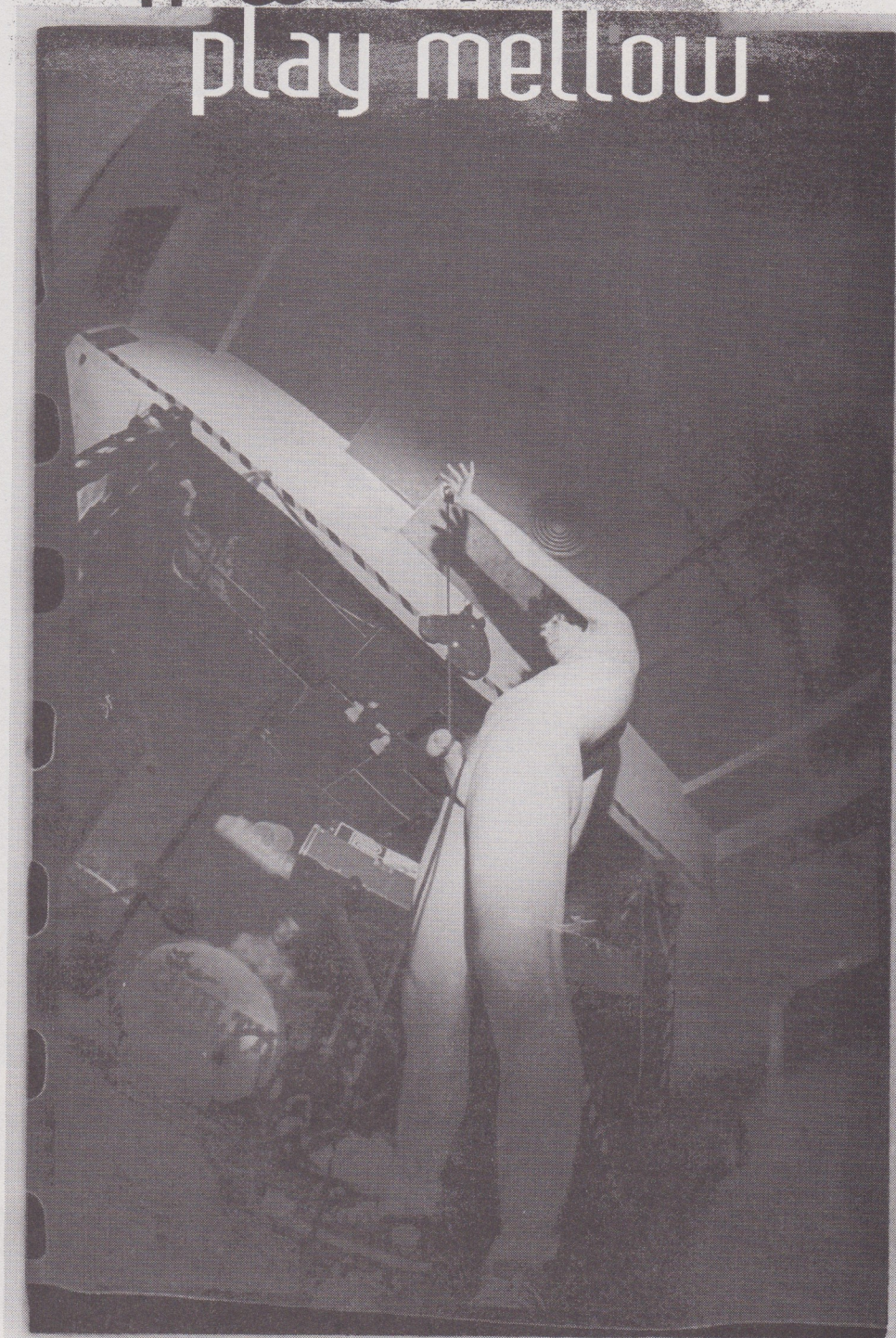
It got to the point where he wasn't happy with just himself being anxiety-ridden, everyone had to be anxiety-ridden with him. It worked. I'm wired that way. Alicja is a lot more calm and levelheaded. It's really tough to describe. We'd try to get through the show without any mistakes so he wouldn't fly off of the handle. He'd make it uncomfortable for everybody: promoters, the people there seeing the show, other bands on the bills, the guy who was supposed to pay us at the end of the night.

We might have had a place lined up to stay that night. Jay would piss those people off and they'd be gone. Then there'd be nowhere to stay. But, at the same time, we wanted to put on a great show. We were so well rehearsed. We practiced twice a week for three hours at a time. We had our show down. If anything went wrong on stage, you'd better watch out. Something was going to get thrown at you or, at the very least, you were going to get yelled at. It was tough.

Alicja and I wanted to keep everything streamlined and harmonious. Jay felt that way, too. If he fucked up, Alicja would give

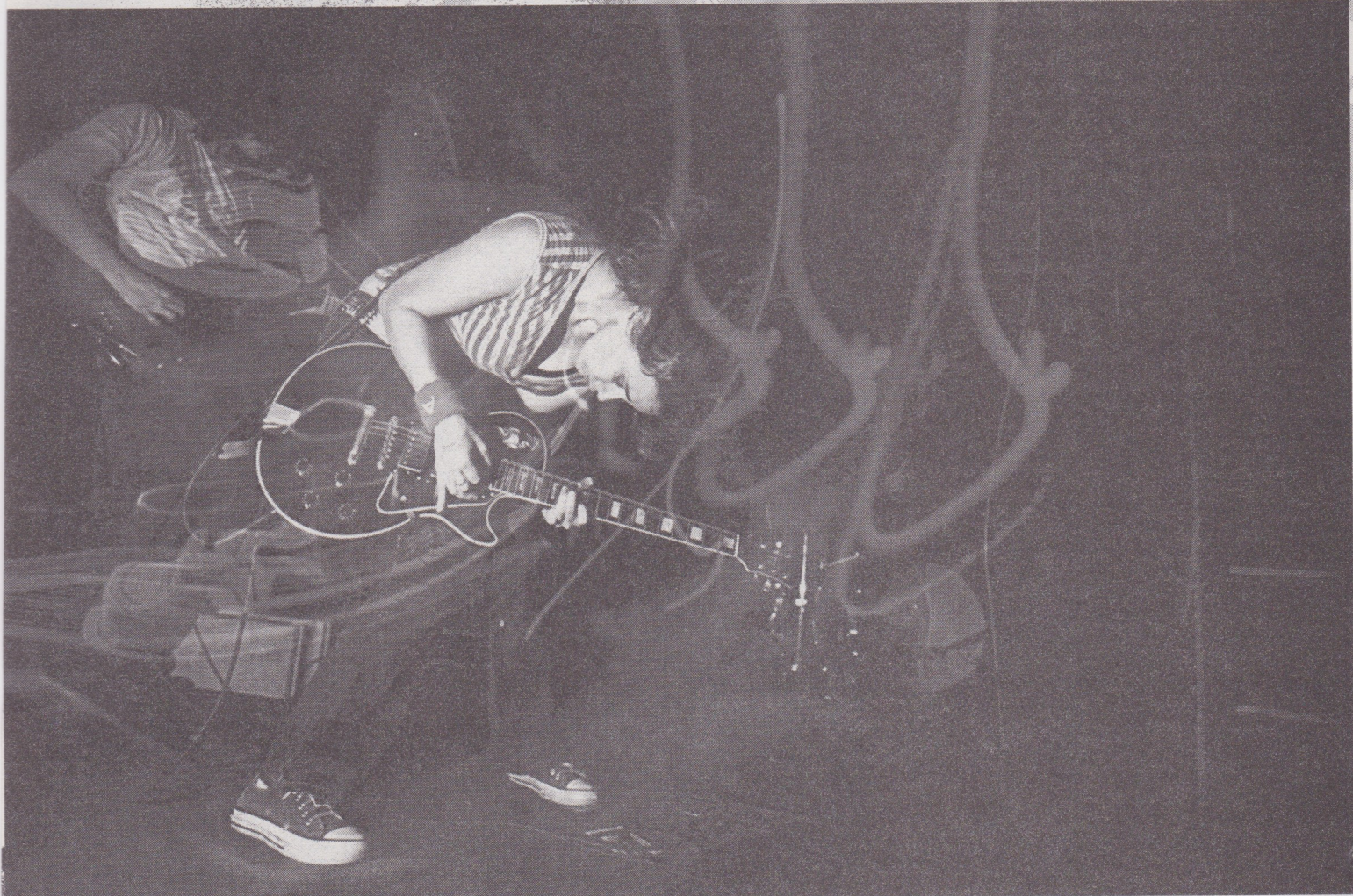


It was hard to play mellow.



All the walls are falling falling down
Falling falling

When you're in a band with someone
you're in a relationship with,
you're not going to
write love songs.



You can't make it
that obvious.

it right back to him. Then Jay would dish it right back. They were in a relationship together so they had the right to do that. I didn't know how to handle it. I'd be ganged up on or it would be me and Jay on Alicia or Alicia and me on Jay.

There was a lot going on in Lost Sounds. An argument might have surfaced in the van ten minutes before we got into town or ten minutes before we got on stage. In retrospect, it's really funny. It wasn't a lot of fun at the time, though. I always felt rewarded when nights went well. There was a heavy and dark dynamic to Lost Sounds.

Meghan: I booked a Lost Sounds show with a band that shall remain nameless. Jay had a meltdown. The opening band couldn't play because half of them were out scoring crack. Alicia told me, "We're in Seattle now. You go deal with Jay. I'm taking the night off. I deal with this Monday through Friday. You go into the van and find out what's wrong with him so we can go on stage."

Other Members of Lost Sounds

Ryan: Were the other guys like Patrick (Jordan) who came into the band able to handle the tension?

Rich: They did. When it was just the three of us—Alicia, Jay and me—we did get along most of the time. We laughed a lot on tour. But when it got dark, it got dark. When it got light it was really, really light. We got along well. We spent so much time together. When the other guys came in, they felt like outsiders. They weren't part of this trinity that had begun at the beginning. They didn't have that much invested. They just had to learn the parts. As far as getting emotionally involved, there was a wall between them and us.

Alicja: I think that the people who came in and out of the band left because they weren't songwriters in Lost Sounds. Sometimes, they'd move to a different city or wanted to form another band with their own sound. They were never made the scapegoats.

I can't recall if I read this or someone told me this, but Jay said in an interview that Lost Sounds was his last real band. I think he was frustrated because he had a sound in his head that he couldn't get others to duplicate. With Lost Sounds, we developed the sound and ideas together. Jay and I never said, "Play your part exactly like this."

Third LP: *Rat's Brains and Microchips* released on Empty Records (2002)

Alicja: "Black Coats/White Fear" and "Energy Drink" were the most popular songs off that album. We were really hitting our stride by then. We thought *Rat Brain's and Microchips* was going to hit a lot harder than it did. But like I said, we always had a steady climb and increase in fans. It was exciting for us. The tours were great. We were making decent money and selling a lot of merch. We were really productive.

That album didn't sound exactly how I wanted it to sound. Jay made it sound a little more blown-out than I wanted it to. But when I go back and listen to it now—it was recorded digitally with 16-tracks—had it more clarity, I would have liked it more. We sounded really brutal live. I just didn't want the record to sound like that. But, overall, I'm happy with *Rat's Brains and Microchips*. We got a little experimental with the opening track. We opened up our shows with "Rat's Brains and Microchips." We were really tight by that time. Our shows were forty-five minutes of brutality.

Rich: I love *Rat's Brains and Microchips*! "Black Coats/White Fear" is my mom's favorite Lost Sounds song. My mom loved Lost Sounds. *Black Wave* and *Rat's Brains* sort of bleed into one another. I don't prefer one album over the other. There are a lot of keyboards on *Rat's Brains*. Jon (Kirksey) was playing cello with us. The band was getting big. The funny thing is that all of our equipment was still shitty! It didn't matter how big the band got. We were trying to do something different. We were really leaving garage rock behind by *Rat's Brains*. Jay and Alicia were moving onto something different. It's a fun record. It's not as serious as *Black Wave*. Then again, the covers were always goofy. Look at *Rat's Brains*. We're flying around on microchips. Alicia loved doing the covers. We all thought they were great.

Ryan: You helped get Lost Sounds on In The Red, correct?

Meghan: I was going to leave Empty. I gave the label a year's notice. I knew that Jay was going to leave Empty. There were a lot of labels interested in doing records with Lost Sounds. John (Reis) from Swami wanted to do a record with Lost Sounds. Lost Sounds ended up doing a whole tour with Rocket From The Crypt. Oddly enough, Slim Moon from Kill Rock Stars wanted to sign Lost Sounds. When Jay told me about Slim Moon being interested, I said, "That's weird." Jay replied, "Well, he's booking a show for us in Olympia. You should come out to Olympia and then we'll come to Seattle." I drove to Olympia.

The show was weird. It ended up being at this biker NA bar. Alicia, Rich, and I were going to leave Jay with Slim Moon. They were supposed to discuss putting out records. I knew it wasn't going to work. Slim was probably too weird for Jay. Alicia, Rich, and I went to some bar. We didn't have cell phones at the time. Twenty minutes later, Jay found us. He must have just walked from bar to bar looking for us. Jay said, "I can't believe you left me with that guy." I told him, "It's Slim Moon from Kill Rock Stars. I thought you could handle it." Jay said, "He's weird."

I have a really good friend named Bruce Milne who ran Au Go Go Records (Australia) for a lot of years. He was visiting here in the States. He said, "Hey, Larry (Hardy) really wants to put out one of your bands. He wants to talk with you about it." People who ran labels, they didn't want to do anything underhanded. Eric (Oblivian/Goner) was

okay with me releasing a Reatards LP. It was a small community back then.

I told Larry, "You're not going to hurt my feelings by releasing the next Lost Sounds record. It's okay." I don't know if he could have done more for them than we could. I'm not sure if Larry was too into metal. The Lost Sounds had a metal sound to them. There was really nothing like the Lost Sounds before they came out. They were new wave, punk rock, metal, and garage all at the same time. They came up with something different. They also had a strong female in the band who could really play.

Future Touch EP released on In The Red Records (2004)

Larry: I didn't meet Meghan until I got involved with Lost Sounds. She helped explain the dynamics of the band. Normally, I wouldn't need someone to do that, but in the case of Lost Sounds it was good information to have. I did an interview with a magazine. They asked me what bands I liked that weren't on my label. I told them Lost Sounds was my favorite. I think that's how the band knew I was interested in them. After *Rat's Brains*, they were looking to move to a different label. Jay cold-called me out of nowhere. He asked me if I wanted to release their next record. I never dealt with someone on my label who called me as much as Jay did. He called me every day. He told me, "We need to be in constant communication with the people we're working with."

Rich: Getting on In The Red was a big deal. We were doing records consistently with Empty up until then and nothing was really happening. The same distribution and the same promotion would be used for each record. We all felt that we needed to step it up a little bit. We weren't interested in becoming rock stars. But when we heard Larry was interested in putting out one of our records, we definitely felt we had to follow up on it. Meghan from Empty was the one who told Jay that Larry was interested. Jay did all the talking with labels. I'm not sure what the relationship was like between Blake from Empty and Jay. The relationship between Jay and Meghan was good. Empty dissolved a short time later. When we signed with In The Red, Larry gave us a big enough advance to buy a 24-track recorder that we used for *Future Touch*.

Alicja: I'm not even sure why we put out that EP. I think we wanted an introduction to In The Red. *Future Touch* is going to be reissued soon. It's going to be re-mastered. It didn't get mastered properly the first time. That was our fault. We didn't have a proper record player to listen to the test pressing on. We took it to different record players and it sounded squashed. "Black Flowers" sounds more blown-out than it should. At that time, Jay was thinking of making the records sound cleaner. We were

going into different places with a heavier emphasis on keyboards and different song structures. Jay had become a really good keyboard player by then.

Larry: I don't recall why we released that EP either, as opposed to a full length. They always had an abundance of material. Jay and Alicja told me how much money they wanted to record what became their self-titled record. It was the money they needed to buy more recording gear. Lost Sounds recorded themselves and produced their own records. I gave them the money. I think it was a case where they said, "Hey, do you want to do an EP to establish the fact that we're on your label?" It happened really quickly. Right after we struck a deal, they had *Future Touch* ready to go. Looking back on it now, *Future Touch* is a really strong record. I'm glad we put it out.

End of Lost Sounds (2005)

Alicja: By the time Larry took us on at In The Red, Jay and I weren't dating anymore. We tried to keep the band going after our relationship ended. It lasted about seven or eight months. It made things weird, especially on tour. That may have been the reason why the band ended. I know Jay can't speak for himself. Jay had Final Solutions. I had River City Tanlines and Mouserocket. I think he got mad that I was making records with other bands. If people appreciated my songs, he got angry. Jay wasn't that way in the beginning.

Jay got pretty blatant about dating other people and bringing it into the mix of our band. That made me not want to hide that part of my life anymore. Something about

The fact that he had to go on one more European tour that he had committed to... he had called everyone on the phone and said, "I can't go on this European tour." We all hated cancelling. We may have cancelled six or seven shows before. Alicja and I were not about to cancel a whole tour that we had signed ourselves up to. People had worked hard setting it up. Jay was unwilling to do it. We thought he was being a big baby about it. He was. We went to Europe. The shows were amazing but Jay definitely did not want to be there. The last show of the tour was a dark night for everyone.

Larry: Jay was recording *Blood Visions* while he was still in Lost Sounds. He told me that he wanted to do a solo album. They were about to break up but they decided to tour Europe one last time. We had talked about doing another Lost Sounds album but it got

Jay's anxiety was awful, awful, awful. You could feel it ten feet away.

Fourth LP: Self-titled released on In The Red Records (2004)

Ryan: Patrick (Jordan) plays bass on your self-titled record. He also plays the incredible solo on "We're Just Living." I think you call it "LA lead" on the record.

Alicja: Patrick is a great guitar player. Sometimes after practice, Patrick would play guitar and Rich would sing. I've actually got twenty minutes of them recorded—Rich singing, "Every rose has its thorn..." Patrick would follow along and Rich would yell, "Take a lead, Patrick." Patrick would go off. If you ever meet Patrick, you'll find out quickly that he can't see anything. He'd go to people's houses and look at their records, his face would be three inches away. Cops would stop him and yell at him: "What are you doing?!" We'd say, "He's nearly blind!" Patrick was all ears to make up for his vision. We'd have to tune his bass on stage. He couldn't see the tuner.

Ryan: I really like the B Side to your self-titled record. "And You Dance?" and "Let's Get Sick" are some of your best songs.

Alicja: I agree. What's funny about that record is we put all of the songs we were most uncomfortable with on the second side and those are the better ones. Had we stayed together, Jay's songs would have turned into new wave pop and my songs would've been loaded with weird timing changes. We were totally outside of garage rock by that time.

me was irritating him a lot. Although I wasn't trying to step on his toes, it seemed to eat him up. He was drinking more. In London he hit me with a mic stand really hard. He got into a physical altercation with me and a yelling match with Rich on that tour. That was the end of the band.

We played a show in Dresden, Germany. They take bookings seriously in Europe. Jay just left the stage. The promoter said to us, "What's wrong? What did I do?" He felt bad. There's a language barrier and he didn't know what was going on. That was pretty uncomfortable.

With River City Tanlines, I realized acting that way wasn't normal. They (Terrence Bishop and John Bonds) could play aggressively and party till six in the morning but still have a good time. They don't yell at the sound guy and the audience. Rich and I just became acclimated with that in Lost Sounds. I was upset that Lost Sounds had so much going for it but that it was falling apart. Even though I wasn't dating Jay anymore, I would have stayed with the band. But it wasn't working for him.

Rich: Alicja and Jay had broken up. It was sad that the band was going to end because of it. I wanted to continue. With Jay's personality, continuing Lost Sounds after their breakup couldn't have worked. With Alicja's personality, it could have. Alicja is very diplomatic. Jay wanted to go onto greener pastures. He started dating someone else. He was infatuated with this new girl.

to the point where it wasn't worth it anymore. They were all miserable working together. Alicja told me she couldn't be in Lost Sounds anymore. She said that Jay had "a great way of sucking the fun out of everything." I can totally see that. Jay was pretty intense. *Blood Visions* is largely about his breakup with Alicja and Lost Sounds. That's his breakup album.

I tried to convince Jay to keep the band together. I thought they had a really good thing going. I'm convinced that had Lost Sounds toured more behind their self-titled record they could have broke through to a bigger audience. It just fell apart and it was all due to Jay not being able to be in a band with Alicja. I told Jay, "This happened to X. John Doe and Exene split up but they were able to work together still. You can do it, too. My friends in the Muffs went through the same thing and they still play together. You can be friends with Alicja and work with her." Jay did not want to hear that. He said, "If we're not going out, then I can't work with her." Jay tried to make life hell for Alicja on that last tour. He was having a ton of fits. He wasn't pleasant at all.

Post Lost Sounds

Alicja: Jay's life ended the way it did. I think had he lived for a few more years, he might have been able to deal with his anxiety better. He honestly came from a very disturbed family and living situation. There's that

saying that if you smoke for ten years, it'll take you ten years to truly feel comfortable with quitting. I don't know if that's true, but I think had Jay been away from his family for seventeen or eighteen years—the time he spent with them—he might have been able to come to terms with some of things he went through when he was young.

Larry: I haven't gone back and listened to much of Jay's music since he's passed away. It's hard for me to listen to his voice. Lost Sounds is a little easier because at least Alicja is on there too. A whole bag of mixed emotions comes up when I hear Jay's songs. I imagine that will pass over time.

Ryan: Is there a Lost Sounds record that stands out to you?

Alicja: *Rat's Brains* is the strongest record as a whole. At least I think so. I listened to *Future Touch* recently because we got it re-mastered. There's a lot of me on that record, so I'm a little uncomfortable with it. It's very satisfying when you have these abstract ideas and your band is willing to play them. I wasn't too happy with the self-titled record we did for Larry, but I listened to it after Jay's death and I'm happier with it now than when we released it. I'll never write songs like that anymore or be in a band like Lost Sounds again.

I think my songs with Black Sunday are the ones I would've brought to Lost Sounds had we continued. Nervous Patterns were songs that didn't quite fit the bill with Lost Sounds. River City Tanlines formed in 2004 when Lost Sounds was still going. That was

a way for me to do something easier. It was rock. I didn't want to sing about the end of the world all the time. When you're in a band with someone you're in a relationship with, you're not going to write love songs. You can't make it that obvious. You feed each other's creativity in different ways.

Larry: Lost Sounds was my favorite thing Jay ever did. Jay working with Alicja was so cool. It's a shame they never took it further. They never made a bad record. Jay ditched keyboards after Lost Sounds. *Blood Visions* has no keyboards on it. That was intentional. It was his reaction to Lost Sounds. It's too bad because working with synths and keyboards made his work so much stronger.

Lost Lost released on Goner (2012)

Ryan: *Lost Lost* is a great collection. The version of "Black Coats/White Fear" on there is incredible. It's very stark and forceful. I think it's the definitive version of the song.

Alicja: *Lost Lost* was a great way to close out Lost Sounds. I love "Black Coats/White Fear." That's one of the first songs Jay brought to the band. It's the same recording that appears on *Lost Lost*. I remember hearing it for the first time. It had what a 4-track recording brings. You really step inside someone's brain with home-recorded 4-tracks. It's a very private moment.

Ryan: "Black Coats/White Fear" is so stark and cold. It paints a picture of war-

torn Europe in the early '40s, where colors and symbols could signify whether you lived or not.

Alicja: Jay wrote that song about the Columbine massacre.

Ryan: That goes to show you how precocious Jay was with his songwriting. He'd write songs that people could interpret differently—whether it be Europe in '39 or Colorado in '99. He caught the feeling of fear and anxiety in that song.

Alicja: How cheesy would it be to say, "Hey, I just wrote a song about the Columbine High School massacre"? How bad could a song like that be? Of course, Jay's song didn't come off that way. "Clones Don't Love" was about a Middle Easterner's interpretation of a "typical" American. This was after September 11. Americans are the clones in the songs and Islamic Extremists were getting rid of these zombies. In Lost Sounds, we covered social events but in a way no one was aware of. We were into creating visual pictures instead of taking positions on particular events.

Rich: Alicja was so nice about giving me a cassette or CD-R of the demos she'd make with Jay. *Lost Lost* shows everyone what was going on in Jay's head and Alicja's head. There are tracks on there that I don't even remember doing, like "Frankenstein Twist." It's really cool. That was recorded at the same time as the material that showed up on the Solid Sex Lovie Doll 7". Jay and Alicja recorded so much stuff.



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I can't stress enough how important it was to be in a band with Alicja. I didn't know it at first with Jay, but he went on to have a big role in Lost Sounds. I didn't see that coming. Jay learned everything in Lost Sounds that he took with him later on. Jay always had it but he developed his skills in Lost Sounds.

I watched a Johnny Ramone interview yesterday. It was the last one he ever did. Johnny always knew what was going to happen. He'd tell the other members of the band what to do: "If the vocal mic goes out, Dee Dee, knock it down and mouth, 'One, two, three, four. Don't look scared. Don't look vulnerable.'" That was Jay's thing. He understood where Johnny was coming from on all fronts. Had Jay broke things down in a different way, things could have been a whole lot easier. Jay didn't want to tell everyone what to do, although he did it. I don't know how else to explain it.

There were so many jaw-dropping moments: "I can't believe Jay just said that," "I can't believe Alicja just said that." It was raw and honest. I've never witnessed anything like that since. Jay didn't want people messing up. If you did, there was going to be a price to pay. People were fearful of Jay. That is true even for me and Alicja at times, but we also became aware of Jay's hidden agenda. You also have to remember that when Jay would go on a tirade of his choosing, Alicja and I were left to clean up the mess—a lot of damage control. So a lot of resentment began to build up concerning Jay.

That also added to what was being projected off the stage from all of us and he knew it as well. It was a conscious thing on his part. He was very smart and manipulative that way.

Everywhere we went, we played the same intense show. We were so rehearsed. We didn't want to fuck anything up. We were a regime. It was hard sometimes. I think we had a great run. We put out so much stuff in such a short amount of time. So many tours. We got a lot done considering what was happening in the band.

I miss Lost Sounds. I really do. I don't miss the situations that would come up, but I miss playing the music. I haven't been challenged like that since. I was getting good at drums. I was becoming a real drummer. It was that constant pressure and practice. When Lost Sounds ended, I never reached that skill level again.

I miss Jay, too. We fell out after Lost Sounds. We were just getting to a point where we'd call each other every couple of months to check in. And then he died. I was so happy that he'd wear a Lover! shirt I gave him. He didn't have to do that. He even wore it on an album cover. I think of it as a nod to a friendship that once was.

Larry: I think Lost Sounds almost singlehandedly changed the direction of garage rock. When *Memphis Is Dead* came out, it caught me by surprise. It was a weird record—part goth but with hints of black metal in it. All these elements that never would

have been in a garage record before were there. As they got bigger, bands like Blank Dogs and the Intelligence started popping up. They were using synths but were somehow considered garage rock still. I don't think that would have happened had Lost Sounds not done it first and paved the way. The people in UV Race who are really young, they're huge Lost Sounds fans. That's one of their favorite bands. Daniel (Stewart) from the UV Race—he played in Total Control as well—he brought Jay over to Australia. They found out about The Screamers through Lost Sounds. It's so weird. A number of young people have gotten into them through Lost Sounds.

Posthumous Releases

There have been a couple posthumous Lost Sounds releases. In 2011 Fat Possum released *Blac Static*, a best-of collection. A year later Goner released *Lost Lost*, a collection of demos and outtakes. Well worth the admission price, *Lost Lost* contains my favorite version of "Black Coats/White Fear" (a 4-track recording Jay brought to the band as a demo). A remastered repressing of *Future Touch* (2004) should be out soon on In The Red.

(Check issue #29 of *Razorcake* for Miss Erika's interview with Alicja and #30 for Speedway Randy's interview with Jay and Ryan Rousseau.)



An Oral History of the Lost Sounds





For the Love of Vinyl

Words, Photos, Layout | Todd Taylor

VINYL RECORDS. They're clunky, heavy, and a major bummer to move. They're fragile and melt in the sun. They collect dust like mad when exposed to air. They're old technology. They scratch easily. They hate dolphins and seagulls because they're not biodegradable. No evidence exists of a record that plays back with absolutely no pops or clicks.

Who gives a fuck? "Perfect" is robots, unnaturally white teeth, and sterile digitalism. Vinyl records don't make a hell of a lot of sense on the surface. Yet, they're durable and if you take care of vinyl, it'll take care of you.

Cassette tapes betrayed me in a big way. I understand that they're cheap to produce in small quantities, but they will break sooner than later and fuck you in the end. I've lost well over two hundred tapes due to breakage over the years and I'm not putting myself through that heartbreak/fiasco again.

CDs are fine for portability. Song selection's easy. Put five on a carousel and get hours of work done. I don't get mad at—nor think too often about—pencil erasers or paperclips. CDs provide a service similar to a piece of office equipment. "Here is some music. Listen." I'm glad they're available for convenience, but I won't cry over their loss or possible extinction.

MP3s. All I can say is if something is ultra easy to get, it's also ultra easy to lose, forget, or be consumed in the bubble of static. I'm actually enjoying long podcasts on MP3. Those two-hour podcasts would be tedious on records. Just think of all that flipping.

That's the lay of the land for this piece. I'm a vinyl enthusiast, not a purist. I celebrate vinyl because it's been a great companion to me for the past thirty years, ever since I co-bought *Pac-Man Fever* with my brother in the early '80s. I still have it.

What follows are some things I've discovered over the years. How I care for and protect my records, a short history of vinyl records as a piece of playable art, and things that are largely unique to the vinyl record format.

To learn how a vinyl record is made, visit: razorcake.org/columns/how-vinyl-records-are-made-a-photo-essay-of-a-record-pressing-plant

For a short history, check out my article "Vinyl Audities" in *Razorcake* #25. It's about the history and technology behind records and the record players that play them.

Handling, Storing, and Caring for Records

There are levels of obsession in collectordom. Some people buy toys and never remove them from the packaging. Some people won't install a float ball in a carburetor that isn't OEM (original equipment manufacturer). Some people will play a vinyl record less than twenty times for fear of wearing it out. I am not one of those people. I use what I have, but I try to take care of it.

You are a filthy, oily human being. It's okay. We all are. Do what you want with vinyl.

Just don't complain that your records start sounding like shit if you treat them poorly.

I also don't consider myself a collector or an audiophile. I'm an archivist and a lover of records, mostly punk. The most I've ever paid for a record is forty dollars. All of my record players were purchased for fifty dollars or less. I'm far less concerned with resale value of a piece of vinyl than improving the quality of my daily life.

With that in mind, let's go over some generally accepted truths:

Records are not beer coasters.

Records are not floor decorations.

Records are not something to cut your pizza on.

After you buy any record in shrink wrap, remove it immediately. If you're a complete dork (I'm pointing at myself), cut out any stickers and place in a polyethylene record bag. Shrink wrap will stretch and bend the record jacket at its corners. In extreme cases, the wrap will warp the record.

Try your best to not touch the grooved playing surface of a record. The grooves are where the sound is. This is especially important to remember when eating pizza and/or tacos.

Always try to handle records by the edges and with your fingertips on the paper label in the middle. This takes practice—from getting it out of the sleeve, to placing it on the turntable, to returning it to the sleeve, but it's totally doable and a skill worth developing.

Buy polyethylene plastic bags and use them. They're about twenty-five bucks for a hundred for LP-sized bags. They're plastic pockets for your records that help both the record and the jacket from getting scratched. After I see a band and snag their set list, I put it in with the record.

Get paper dust jackets. Dust jackets are what the vinyl record stays inside of whenever it's not being played. If an album comes in a printed dust jacket, remove the record and slide it in a replacement dust jacket to prevent bite. Records will often saw through both paper and cardboard, causing splits. If you're strapped for cash, thrift stores are your friend. Sweet talk the cashier into harvesting just the dust jackets of the Christmas, Herb Albert, and Barbra Streisand LPs that have been sitting there rotting since their original release.

I store records inside the dust jacket, but outside and behind the cardboard album art inside the plastic sleeve. This limits both the circles of the depression ring and ring wear on the artwork.

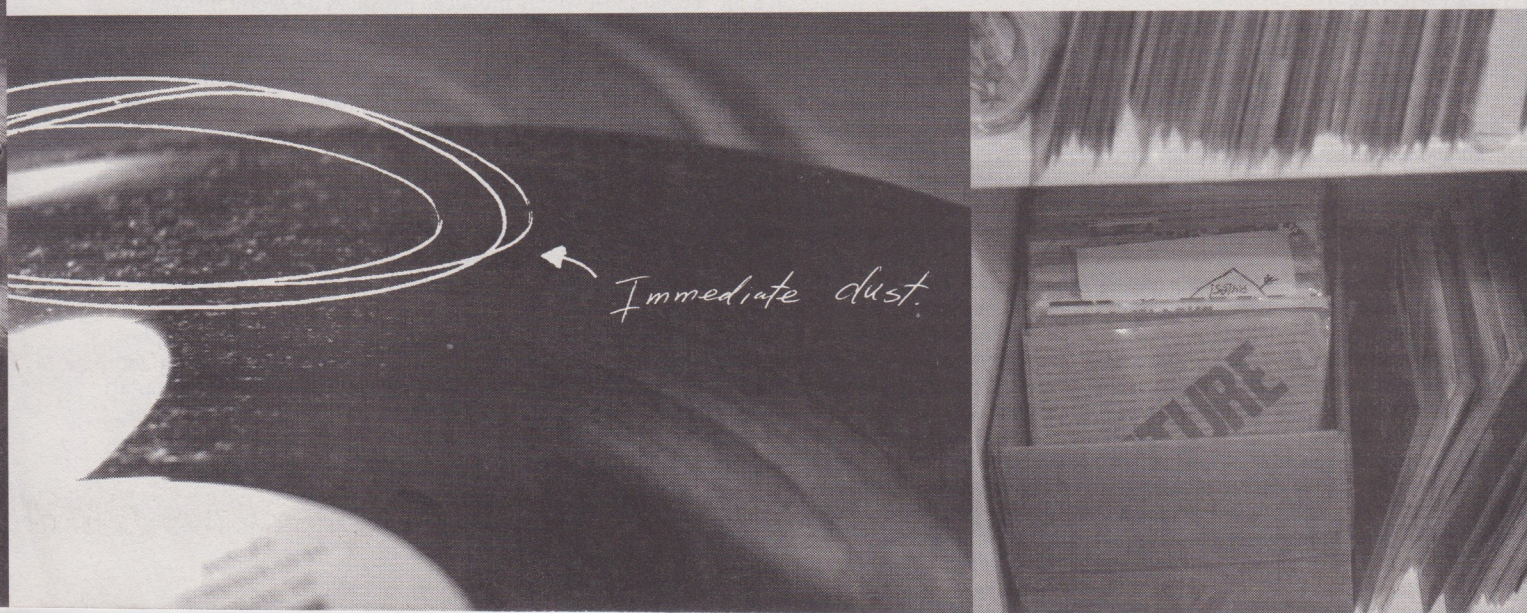
Store records vertically, not leaning/tacoing. Don't pile them on the floor. No one likes to be on the bottom of a dog pile. Records are no different. All that weight pressing down isn't good on the grooves.

Lucky Lager boxes work well for 7" storage. In our neighborhood, Lucky has been replaced with Sessions. Something about the stubby bottle packaging matches up nicely with 7" storage.

Don't store records in the bathroom. That's where zines go. Don't store records in a place that gets hit with direct sunlight, or a place that gets a ton of heat. Records are made of vinyl. They'll warp and that's a bummer.

Some cats treat vinyl records as scratching posts. Be wary of their feline trickery.

Don't be a jock-brute. Leave that attitude out on the field, bro. When pulling out records to play, it's all about follow through. Be cool and re-file them when you're done. No need to jam it in, slap it down, and treat it nastily.





Don't store records in the That's where zines go.

Cleaning a Record

There are levels of anality involved in cleaning records.

It's like the market for car wash solutions. Most of them are expensive, overly fancy, and fear-based honky bullshit.

There's stuff called "Record Revirginizer" that's like a twelve-hour facial mask to de-gunk records for sixty bucks a pint. It's been said on the internet that a thin layer of wood glue works, too, but that seems like a lot of effort to remove dirt.

It is true that playing a dirty record ruins the stylus and dings the groove in the record. Mix a solution of mild soap and lukewarm distilled water, carefully clean with microfiber or a record brush, going in the circular direction of the groove. Rinse. Repeat if necessary. The record surface will look cloudy if dirt's still there. Wait until bone dry before playing. Done.

Flattening the Taco

Warped records are a bummer. They're not playable. They launch the needle.

Beta test these methods at first with records you're willing to completely mangle. I recommend any Eagles record. Actually, every Eagles record.

Faster: Get a couple of large books that are slightly larger than the record you're trying to fix, so you don't get fingerprints and oil over the playing surface.

Clamp the unbent section of the record between the two large books, to get a firm hold. (If you don't have any books, get some from the library. Ebook readers won't work for this.)

Heat the exposed, bent part of the record with a hairdryer with the warp pointing up.

When the vinyl gets flexible, gently but firmly press down on the warp with the top book. Press out the bend.

With the record still warm, keep pressure on the top book—sandwich the record completely between the books until the vinyl cools. Weigh down with something heavy.

Repeat if necessary. Takes a little practice.

Slower: Get two pieces of glass larger than the record. Goodwill again—glass from picture frames works fine.

Clean the glass.

Sandwich the record between pieces of glass.

If you live in hot climate, place outside and weigh it down. Check

on the record every half hour, until flattened. Climates vary. May take all day. May take less than an hour.

Medium: If you have an oven, preheat to lowest temp, place vinyl in the glass sandwich.

Don't close the oven door and monitor progress.

When the glass on top collapses into flatness, immediately turn off heat.

Don't touch the record or the glass until everything's back at room temp.

Let cool.

Test out.

My Hole's Too Small!

What do you do if the hole in the middle of the record is too tight and you can't get it over the record spindle?

Be careful. A record is just a piece of plastic. Gently use a circular file. Bore the hole. If that's too extreme, gently jam a plastic tip of a pen into the hole and carefully ream it. Be careful not to snap the record. Rolled up fine grit sandpaper works, too.

A Short History of Vinyl Chemistry

Records are made of polyvinyl chloride, commonly known as PVC. It's the second-most widely produced plastic in the world. Ethylene¹ and chlorine are its raw materials. Ethylene is made through thermal cracking by processing either natural gas or petroleum. Ethylene's worldwide production exceeds that of any other organic compound. Seas are literally filled with the raw material for chlorine, an abundant, cheap industrial grade salt. There are two extremely common raw materials. Pure polyvinyl chloride in its virgin state is a white, fine-grained powder or resin. It hardens into a stiff, crumbly substance.

United States patents #1,929,453 and #2,188,396 for the "Synthetic Rubber-like Composition and Method of Making Same"; "Method of Preparing Polyvinyl Halide Products."

Waldo Lonsbury Semon was an industrial chemist under the employ of a tire manufacturer. He was a consummate inventor, filing for 138 patents over his lifetime. His charge in 1937 was to develop a synthetic replacement to natural rubber. Rubber degrades in solvents,

¹ Ethylene is also an important natural plant hormone. It is used in agriculture to force fruit ripening. It's also... footnote-Fuck you, Dale.

bathroom.

Stubby beer box + lots of tape
= 7" box

like gasoline. Rubber was also getting more expensive. Semon experimented with PVC which, at the time, was considered a “trash compound” by the manufacturing industries. It was a byproduct or substance routinely thrown away. Semon called it a “tough horny white material”² in his patent application. It was too rigid, too brittle to create an adhesive for bonding rubber to metal.

Semon made a paste from the PVC and heated the mixture to a high enough temperature to render it plastic or fluid. Semon discovered the substance became both flexible and elastic. In that state the PVC could then be molded into any size and shape. The composition cooled and set to “a stiff rubbery gel.” Semon then developed a method to plasticize the material by blending it with additives.³ Semon grasped the wide applications for his invention. Thinned PVC could be used as a water resistant coating for fabrics—raincoats, “covering automobile tops,” gas masks, and boots. He knew it could be used for flooring and house siding. “In short,” he noted, “the compositions of this invention are almost universally applicable where a permanent, resilient material is desired.” Fortunately, Semon was pulling in a salary with the tire company. Unfortunately, he received one dollar for his PVC patent.

A Short, Incomplete List of Things Made with PVC That Aren't Records

A hell of a lot of everyday things are made with PVC. Here's a quick list: garden hoses, plastic food wrap, bumper stickers, plastic bottles, imitation leather (pleather, Naugahyde), electric wire insulation, medical blood bags, tablecloths, potato cannon barrels, golf balls, shoe heels, stuffed animal insides (the “beans” in beanie babies), bubble wrap, adhesive tape, and catheters. Roughly half of the world's PVC resin manufactured annually is used for producing sewage pipes.

Move Over Shellac

Another of PVC's earliest creative possibilities was vinyl phonograph records. Compared to shellac—the material used for a majority of

phonograph records before the advent of PVC—vinyl records were lightweight, relatively unbreakable, and weren't as noisy when played.

Pellets

PVC pellets are the raw ingredient of every vinyl record pressed. They're tiny chunks. Think lentils or tiny nibs of licorice. They all start off as clear, but there are many different readily-available colors of pellets. The pellets get melted down and formed into a soft puck shape, then steam-heated and pressed between the two molds to form the two sides of a record. Many large record pressing plants have their own PVC formula that is made specifically for their plant. They're very secretive about what's in their pellets. If you'd like to buy some pellets, there are plenty currently for sale from China and India. The starting price for “soft, flexible PVC pellets for extrusion molding” is \$1,200 a ton. Minimum order is two tons.

Labels: Steam, Not Glue

A special paper is used in the record making process for labels. The labels are pre-baked in an oven to remove moisture so they don't blister when pressed into the vinyl. PVC is melted into a rubber patty, called a biscuit. Labels are placed underneath and on top of the biscuit, sandwiching it. The biscuit is very hot. A metal stamper applies pressure at a high temperature. It melts and molds the biscuit and labels together. The label sticks right in. There is no glue used in the manufacturing process.

If you ever encounter a puffy label on a record, it's due to the press stamping in two labels. Paper melds into vinyl, not into paper, causing the bubbles. Take a sharp blade and carefully slice into the bubble and remove the outer label.

Black Vinyl

In the late 1800s, records were made with a combination of shellac and pulverized, soft material, like limestone, wood flour, or clay. Carbon black—like the soot left from a candle flame and traditionally

² Semon was also an eloquent inventor, to wit: “This invention relates to the art of preparing synthetic rubber-like compositions, and especially to the art of preparing such compositions from raw materials which themselves are not endowed with the resilience of rubber.”

³ Semon took the most pleasure out of another invention that was far less heralded than vinyl: synthetic rubber bubble gum. “It looked just like ordinary gum,” Semon said, “except that it would blow these great big bubbles.” Unfortunately, the tire company he worked for thought his invention was a defect. They didn't know how to market the invention and didn't think anybody would buy it.

Real Punks Shovel Snow

produced from charring organic materials such as wood or bone—was used for color. Without this added blackness, shellac records tended to resemble a glaucous gray or a muddy brown. Most record companies considered these colors unattractive. Carbon black made the leap from shellac to PVC.

Through 2013, carbon black's high tinting strength blackens the transparent PVC plastic⁴, and makes the disc opaque. Many of us are familiar with carbon black in powder form. It's used for photocopier and laser printer toner. Carbon black is also used as color pigmentation in paints, inks, and plastics, but primarily its use is as reinforcing filler in tires, automotive belts, and hoses. It absorbs ultraviolet radiation, which further helps the material it's impregnated in to resist degradation.

Although very difficult to prove, these additional properties may be part of the reason that black records are the workhorse vinyl color of the music industry. To this day, black is the most prevalent color of vinyl pressed. Perhaps it's a self-fulfilling prophecy, simple supply and demand. It's the most common, so the pellets are cheaper. Black vinyl is almost always the default color on any record pressing order form.

Virgin Vinyl

Virgin vinyl means that the album is not from recycled plastic but purely from PVC pellets. With records, not all virgins are the same. Virgin vinyl can sound horrible if not-formulated-for-vinyl-records grade PVC pellets are used.

To save on costs, many companies use "regrind," unground, lumps and chunks, and reprocessed vinyl. The shavings. The unsuccessful tests. Remaindered records. This practice isn't necessarily bad if the PVC is unadulterated. PVC can be melted repeatedly without degradation. When it gets to a certain high temperature, it becomes pliable, can be reformed, and hardens again as it cools without losing any of the desirable properties of its strength and flexibility. The trouble comes with contamination of foreign materials in the factory, from dirt and dust to grease to chemicals, to moisture, to bits of labels in the center of records getting melted into a new record. The mixing of suspicious remainders results in many "black" records that, when held up to the light, are dark translucent brown.

In the name of ecology, reputable record pressing plants do offer recycled vinyl as an above-board, earth-friendly choice. Traditionally, these records are thinner, rigid, noisier, and more prone to warping and dishing.

⁴ Carbon black is also called acetylene black, channel black, furnace black, lamp black, and thermal black.

The Black and White—What Color Sounds the Best?

That question's almost like asking how voodoo works. It depends on you who ask. There are also leagues of other steps in pressing a record that could have a larger effect on the sound than the color of its vinyl.

Netherlands-based Record Industry, the largest vinyl pressing plant in Europe, said "Although our colored vinyl has a very high quality standard, audio pressed on non-black vinyl is more susceptible to higher noise levels and/or clicks in the lead-in and lead-out grooves or on quiet parts of the recording."

Some believe that white vinyl with swirls of black flux sounds the best. The reasoning behind the theory is—due to white vinyl being relatively softer than black—it fills in the grooves better.

Spiders! The Spindle Hole Adapter

Record companies of the 1900s pressed records with spindle holes—the hole in the center of the record—in different sizes in an attempt to force customers to purchase only their phonographs.

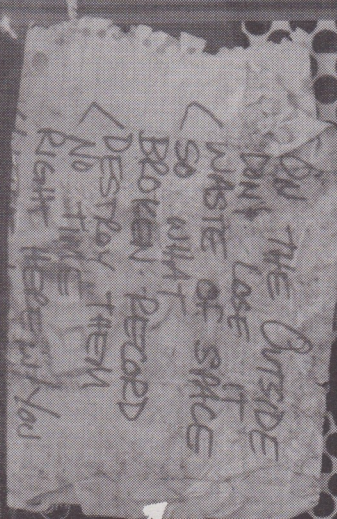
For a period of years, jukeboxes were incredibly popular. Designed to play one record after another by stacking the selected records, they used a thick, stabilizing spindle to secure records. To accommodate the thick rod of jukebox play, 7" records were pressed with big holes in the middle of them. Public jukeboxes eventually waned in popularity and were supplanted by personal-use spindle drop record players. They played a stack of 7"s in succession, plopping one down on top of the one just played. This method was convenient. It also scratched the hell out of the records.

There are several patents granted for snap-in molded inserts to make single 45 RPM records compatible with the small hole of a 33½ RPM record. The adapter fits inside and becomes interlocked with the hole. These plastic doohickeys are called spindle hole adapters. I've always known them as spiders.

Granted in July 1955 James L. D. Morrison of the V-M Corporation received patent #2712943 for such a plastic insert. The patent claims, "advantages over previously designed adaptors and is characterized by high efficiency, cheapness of construction, and facility of mounting." The small device was springy enough to account for the small yet irregular difference of the size of the big holes in records and rigid enough to firmly grip the record. The plastic adapter also had "upstanding lugs" along its flat surface. These nubs put a little space between each record after it dropped. The nubs also interlocked and formed a driving connection with the adapter below, making each record in the stack spin at 45 RPM, preventing slippage and limiting some scuffing.

MARKED MEN

ON THE OUTSIDE



Set list saved with record.

Hidden Punk Etchings Revealed



What's in the Dead Wax/Matrix Area?

Inside all the grooves and outside of the paper label, there are almost always numbers and letters inscribed in the vinyl that were etched by the person who cuts the master lacquer of the record. The number is called a matrix number and the reason it's there is so the pressing plant can match the stamper plates to the labels. Usually there's an A or B in there somewhere, so if you have a record with blank or indeterminate labels, you can usually figure out which side is which.

If you get a record with the matrix number scratched out, or if there is nothing in the matrix area, chances are high it's a bootleg.⁵ The matrix numbers are purposefully obscured or omitted to prevent tracing the record back to the pressing plant and getting charged with piracy. When looking through my records for this piece, an astounding number of my vinyl has a circled U in the dead wax. I traced their pressing back to United Record Pressing in Nashville, Tennessee.

Messages in Wax

As marginalia is to books, dead wax is to records. It's a great way for bands and/or record labels to reference inside jokes or document a memorable event. There are some inspired, kooky, cryptic things scribbled right into the wax if you look close enough. To the right is a short list of ones that caught my attention.

Shit That Can Be Done to Records Let's See an MP3 Pull That Trick

There are a gangload of different types of grooves that can be etched into a record. Here's a short list of possibilities beyond the common single spiral scratch on each side of a record.

Parallel grooves/roulette grooves: A different song plays, depending on when the needle is dropped on the record's edge. It's like a blind

⁵ I have Double Negative's Daydreamnation, a record where it looks like what was first written was a mistake and scribbled out. I'm positive it's not a bootleg.

Against Me!,
Reinventing Axl Rose
B: "If you can read this, take a bath."

Big Boys, Fun, Fun, Fun
A: "America, Empty Your Swimming Pools or Else!"

Career Suicide,
Attempted Suicide
A: "It's Good, But It's Not Hardcore!"
B: "One Rule: No Thinking"

The Clash, London Calling
A: "Tear"
B: "Down"
C: "The"
D: "Walls"

Daylight Robbery,
Ecstatic Vision
B: "None in the Hair, None in the Mouth"

Dead Kennedys, Give Me Convenience or Give Me Death
B: "Dolphins Make Better Anarchists than People Do"

Descendents,
Milo Goes to College
B: "I Wasn't a Punk When It Didn't Count"

Dillinger Four,
Midwestern Songs of the Americas
A: "Real Punks Shovel Snow"

Fugazi, Red Medicine
A: "Another Vote for Dukakis"

Hüsker Dü, Zen Arcade
Side D: "Within the Circuits That Make Pac-Men Die and Vessels Disintegrate"

Jawbreaker,
24 Hour Revenge Therapy
A: "It Takes a Starving Man"
B: "...To Bite into a Blue Weiner"

Minutemen,
Double Nickels on the Dime
A: "Arena Rock Is the New Wave"
B: "Punk Rock Is the New Nostalgia"
C: "Dance Rock Is the New Pasture"
D: "Chump Rock Is the New Cool"

Necros, Conquest for Death
B: "Be Nude, Be Free"

Poison Idea, Kings of Punk
A: "Knowledge Ends... Religion Begins"

Spontaneous Disgust, Demo CD
A: "Fuck You, Dale"
B: "No, seriously. Fuck You, Dale!"

Sick Sick Birds, Gates of Home
A: "Drunk as a Chicken"

The Stitches, 4 More Songs from the Stitches
A: "The More You Want..."
B: "The Less You Get"

Stiff Little Fingers,
Inflammable Material
A: "A Porky Primecut"
B: "Porky"

The Taxpayers, God Forgive These Bastards
A: "Goof Punx for a Better World"

The Tim Version, Decline of the Southern Gentleman
B: "Place Needle Here for John Cage Cover"

Total Control, Henge Beat
A: "Crayon Graffiti Says"
B: "Free the Henge!"

Zero Boys, Vicious Circle
B: "Stay away from Mom's Wallet"



ORANGE
AMPLIFICATION



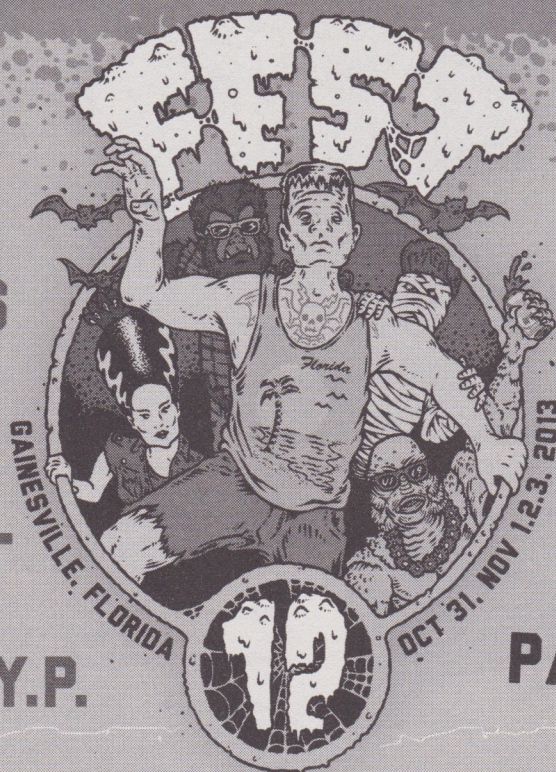
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**BOUNCING
SOULS**
**NIGHT
MARCHERS**

THE (REUNION)
DRAFT

TOYS THAT KILL

THE **LAWRENCE
ARMS** **F.Y.P.**



SAMIAM
BOY SETS FIRE
**DILLINGER
FOUR**

OBITS BRAID
KNAPSACK
(REUNION)

PAINT IT BLACK

A Wilhelm Scream / Ann Beretta (reunion) / Banner Pilot / Big D and the Kids Table / Broadway Calls / Code Orange Kids / The Dopamines / The Flatliners / I Am The Avalanche / Masked Intruder / Mean Jeans / The Menzingers / Teenage Bottlerocket / Mustard Plug / No Trigger / Off With Their Heads / Torche / The Copyrights / Cobra Skulls / Iron Chic / Nothington / Lemuria / Tim Barry / Retox / Mixtapes / Larry and His Flask / The Swellers / Bridge and Tunnel / Andrew Jackson Jihad / White Lung / Underground Railroad to Candyland / Ceremony / Tenement / Monikers (reunion)

Blacklist Royals / Calculator / Citizen / Crusades / Great Cynics / Heartsounds / Look Mexico / Luther / Red City Radio / Restorations / Signals Midwest / Smith Street Band / Timeshares / Arms Aloft / Captain We're Sinking / Elway / Plow United / Sundials / Worn In Red / You Blew It / Best Practices / Aspai / Broadcaster / Candy Hearts / Slingshot Dakota / Dikembe / Greenland Is Melting / Daylight / Stickup Kid / David Liebe Hart Band / Young Turks / Sainthood Reps / The WILD / Pianos Become the Teeth / Banquets / The Holy Mess / Slow Death / Post Teens / Leagues Apart / Reverse the Curse / After the Fall / City Mouse / The Careeners / High Dive / Toby Foster

Cement Matters / Heartless / Lee Corey Oswald / Lovely Bad Things / No Weather Talks / Nona / Pity Party / Survey Says / Rescuer / Tiny Empires / Too Many Daves / Weak Teeth / world's scariest police chases / Artless Nancy / Direct Effect / Divided Heaven / Greys / Heartwell / Hold Tight! / the Hotel Year / Itto / Kill Lincoln / Ma Jolie / Octaves / Old Flings / Robbie Huddleston / Shores / State Lines / The Stereo State / The Exquisites / Wet Nurse / Aspiga / Direct Hit / All Aboard / Frameworks / the Mighty Fine / Mockingbird Wish Me Luck / The Young Leaves / Big Awesome / Gameday Regulars / Have Mercy / Lipstick Homicide / Up for Nothing / Weekend Dads / American Lies / Funsize / Lauren Measure / The Isotopes / Strong City / Caves / Dudes Night / Fake Boys / Kite Party / Two Hand Fools / Worriers / 1994! / Dewing / No More / Audacity / Pentimento / Protagonist / Run Forever / Light Years / Coffee Project / Dig It Up / High Dive / Toby Foster / Jeff Rowe / War on Women / Stabbed in Back

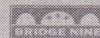
Wolf-face / All People / Address / Between Drains / Cain Marko / Cayotana / Cry Baby / Devon Kay and the Solutions / Edmonton / The Future Now / Little Big League / Low Cloud / Mark McCabe / Museum Mouth / Prevenge / Resonants / Rob Lynch / Save Ends / Snakehealers / The Sky We Scrape / Tiny Moving Parts / Wank for Peace / War Tempest / Whenskiesarayray / Gunners Daughter / Late Bloomer / Perdition / Dilly Liar / Boneshakers / Here's To Nathan / More At thefestfl.com

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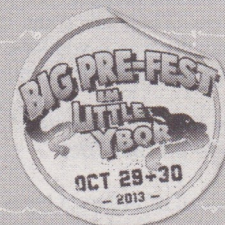


RAZORCAKE



JUMP/START

NIGHT OWLS
PRESENTS GALLOP



The best thing to do for a record? Play the shit out of it.

choose-your-own adventure with separate, interlaced spiral grooves. Between four and forty distinct tracks can be interlaced on a LP, depending on the length of the tracks. Times have to be equal for each groove. The Mad Mystery Sound, *It's a Super-Spectacular Day* has eight grooves. Each song started out the same, but had eight different endings. "It's a great big, beautiful, wonderful, incredible super spectacular day, until..." (something shitty happens.) Fun. Fucked Up also did this with *Looking for Gold* 12"EP. Two separate tracks individually segue into the title track.

Locked groove: A groove that intentionally repeats every turn of the record. It repeats over and over until the tone arm is lifted. These are usually at the end of the record.

Tuff Darts "(Your Love Is Like) Nuclear Waste" ends with the sound of a never-ending nuclear explosion and side four of Lou Reed's *Metal Machine Music*... sounds like the rest of *Metal Machine Music*.

Inside out cut: A groove that starts at the center of the record and plays out to the edge.

Select copies of Loli & The Chones' *Total Fucking Genocide* LP requires the user to place the stylus at the "end" of the side to play it.⁶ A word of caution from Aardvark mastering: "Specify if you want us to prevent the stylus from falling off the edge."

Locked groove, then a space, then a run-in groove for a hidden track: The astute listener has to physically lift the needle off the record and place down further in for the next song to play. The secret Dumbag Daryl And The GEG Bags EP is hidden in the center of God Equals Genocide's *Rattled Minds* LP.

Etching one side of the record: Unplayable line drawing etched right into the vinyl. Looks cool. Sounds like shitty new wave and will wreck your needle.

Novelty Records

PVC's flexibility and ability to be thinned and cut into funny shapes, have given way to a number of novelty records. Here's a short list. **Laminated cardboard:** Songs have been stamped onto cereal boxes (A Monkees song on Honey Comb, collect all four), Chung King frozen Chinese food, and postcards.

Shaped discs: Vinyl records have notably been cut into the shapes of circular saw blades, the USA landmass, and Pee Wee Herman.

Picture discs: A picture disc is just two pieces of paper embedded between two biscuits of clear vinyl. You can write all over the paper parts before they add the vinyl to 'em.

Flexi discs: These floppy, one-sided numbers were often inserted in magazines, like *National Geographic* "Songs of the Humpback Whale." I have a flexible Crass's *Sheep Farming in the Falklands*. This format's making a bit of a comeback. They're good for ten, fifteen plays before the sound totally drops out.

⁶Glad to confirm—it was only one side (the B side, though the backward master was called the "C" side for the sake of clarity at the pressing plant). I believe it was two hundred "A/C" versions out of the 2,100 or so copies pressed. They came in separate boxes from the pressing plant and I made sure to mix them in with the boxes of "A/B" versions. Some distributors were mildly upset as they wanted to ensure that they could send "A/C"s to certain accounts, but I thought that would have spoiled the fun of it.

—Michael Lucas, Repent Records

RECORD FACTS AND FICTIONS

FICTION: 180-220 gram records sound better than "standard" 120-140 gram records. The cut in the record is the same depth as a regular record.

FACT: They are thicker. ("weight-o-phile" doesn't have the same ring as "audiophile")

FACT: They resist warping more than thinner records.

FACT: They have a higher collectability factor.

FACT: For bands getting ready to press a record, there are two main limitations for the recording/cutting volume of your record: 1.) How long the sides are. 2.) Your recording's volume threshold on vinyl.

FACT: 7"s at 33 RPM sound worse than 7"s at 45 RPM since the audio's wavelength is reduced as you get closer to the center label.

FICTION: You should never play a record immediately after you play it.

FACT: Estimates for the stylus surface temperature during playback are 300-500 °F. Yet, no published evidence exists of back-to-back playback causing any more permanent damage than if repeated plays are separated by any longer period of time.

FACT: The best thing to do for a record? Play the shit out of it because music's good for you.

Lathe cuts on PVC: Peter King of Geraldine, New Zealand in the late 1980s began using a lathe to cut microgrooves into clear polycarbonate discs one at a time. The record doesn't need to be pressed and the run can be as low as twenty. However, the sound quality is significantly worse than a proper vinyl record. Like flexis, they degrade in quality after repeated playing. Still, a really cool artifact.

Dub plate: The ability to make a single copy of a playable record before it goes through all the plating metal work. Introduced to the world through reggae artists.

What's Better Than Buying a Record from an Independent Distro or Store?

Buying two or more. When buying from an independent distro, try to buy more than one piece of vinyl. The postage and shipping cost doesn't double with the second record. That way, the post office doesn't get the largest share of the profits.

Thanks to Rev. Nørb, Julia Smut, Dave Eck, Daryl Gussin, Candice Tobin, Kari Hamanaka, and Replay Dave for their help with this piece.



Alice Bag and her band The Bags set the bar for the catchy, punchy, and intense punk rock emanating out of Los Angeles in the late 1970s. The band lasted until 1981 but a Dangerhouse single here and a compilation appearance there was all that was really necessary to cement their legendary status. Behind the songs and gigs, Alice had her own fascinating back story, one that was not fully captured until the release of her book *Violence Girl: East L.A. Rage to Hollywood Stage, A Chicana Punk Story*.

In true punk rock fashion (and I am using the word “punk” a lot here!), Alice has been taking her book on tour, doing readings and solo performances at select venues. I was lucky enough to be able to Skype away with Ms. Alice “Douche” Bag before she stopped in Vancouver, BC’s Red Cat Records. Here’s what happened....

Nardwuar: Who are you?

Alice: I’m Alice Bag. I was in a band back in 1977 in Los Angeles called The Bags. We wore bags over our heads. Then I became a teacher and I was in a bunch of different bands, mostly in L.A. Now I’m an author.

Nardwuar: And speaking of Alice Bag and authorisms, you’d like to say something to the people of Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, wouldn’t you? You’re coming here this Sunday.

Alice: Yes, Sunday at Red Cat, four o’ clock. Please come.

Nardwuar: What exactly will be happening, Alice Bag, author of *Violence Girl*?

Alice: I’ll be reading excerpts from my book and playing a few songs, and the songs are going to go along with the excerpts. So if I read something from my childhood, I will try and play something from that time—we’ll move through the story sequentially that way.

Nardwuar: So Alice, right off the bat, you could’ve retired from rock and roll in 1975, couldn’t you?

Alice: [laughs] 1975?

Nardwuar: Yes, you could’ve retired in 1975.

Alice: I don’t know about that. I don’t think I can ever retire.

Nardwuar: I think you could’ve retired in 1975 because you met Michael Jackson.

Alice: [laughs]

Nardwuar: Is this true, Alice Bag?

Alice: Yes, yes it is true. He rolled up in a limousine. I was stalking Elton outside of CBS, waiting for him to film *The Cher Show*, and this limousine drove up and rolled down the window. There was a young Michael Jackson who was wondering what we were up to. He was so friendly. It’s hard to believe that he went through so many changes and is gone now. But yeah, it was very exciting at the time.

Nardwuar: At that time, how were you dressed? What did Michael Jackson see, Alice Bag?

Alice: He saw me in very short hair and Elton John glasses because I was a huge Elton fan. I had these giant spectacles with rhinestones

all around. I had ditched school, so I’m not sure if I had changed out of my uniform or if I was wearing my Elton John pants. I had these pants that I wore when I was on my stalking missions that were just a pair of jeans on which I’d sewn the word “Elton” in silver lamé. So I would’ve looked freakish.

Nardwuar: Meeting Michael Jackson, 1975—reason to retire number one for Alice Bag. But number two reason to retire, was all the way back after playing at a cast party for *M*A*S*H*.

Alice: [laughs] I know, isn’t that funny? Yeah, and I got to meet Hot Lips Houlihan. That was her name, right?

Nardwuar: It was indeed.

Alice: Yeah.

Nardwuar: I just love the idea of Hollywood. Like, god bless Hollywood, right? For some rock and rollers, like for me, meeting Michael Jackson, playing a cast party for *M*A*S*H* in The Bags, did it get any better than that?

Alice: [laughs] Well, I was in a band with a guy who used to write episodes for—wait, wait, wait. Let me back it up to *M*A*S*H*. I’m sure you know this, but Joanna Lee—who was Craig Lee’s mother, who was my guitarist—Joanna Lee was actually in *Plan 9 from Outer Space*. So I was in a band with the alien’s son.

Nardwuar: Well, that’s reason number three that you could retire early from rock and roll, Alice Bag. That’s amazing to be in the same band with somebody that was in—what did she do in *Plan 9 From Outer Space*?

Alice: She was one of the aliens.

Nardwuar: Going back to the *M*A*S*H* party, The Bags—a fierce punk rock band—playing for *M*A*S*H* people. Were they ready for an onslaught?

Alice: No. [laughs] I don’t think they were ready. They sat there with their canapés looking at us sort of dumbfounded. But they were very nice. They were very polite. I think Joanna introduced us as her son’s band, so people were tolerant.

Nardwuar: Alice Bag, I read a great review for your book, *Violence Girl*, in *Razorcake* and I thought that I would begin with the question that they asked in their review: Why didn’t you go for lunch with Oprah?

Alice: The real reason I didn’t go to lunch with Oprah is because I couldn’t go to lunch with Oprah, because I was singing back-up with El Vez, and El Vez was going to be on the show. So we were going to fly out and Robert (Lopez), El Vez, was late for the flight. So our luggage somehow ended up on another plane at another airport, and we didn’t have clothes. Her secretary called and invited us to dinner with Oprah because she was dining with all her guests. It was in a nice restaurant and we had no clothes, so we couldn’t go. I had a pair of torn jeans and a Ramones T-shirt on, I think. So that’s the real reason I turned down dinner with Oprah.

Nardwuar: Alice, your book *Violence Girl*—does it have the world record for chapters? How many chapters are in it?

Alice: I don’t know. I haven’t counted them. It sounds like a good contest, though. [laughs]

Nardwuar: It makes it so easy to read—I love it. I was kind of thinking, “Alice was from The Bags and still is rocking, and is like, punk rock at heart, and that’s why the chapters are short, like punk rock songs. Why are they so short, the chapters? Why are they so short?”

Alice: Because they’re like punk rock songs, exactly. [laughs] No, no, no. The real reason they’re short is because I was blogging and I would write a chapter every day. That seemed to me the right length for a blog entry.

Nardwuar: And for people who don’t know, you grew up where, Alice Bag?

Alice: I grew up in East L.A.

Nardwuar: Ditman Avenue.

Alice: Ditman Avenue. [laughs]

Nardwuar: And growing up, you mention in your book *Violence Girl*, a lot about Mexican garage rock, at least a few allusions to it. Like Los Teen Tops and Thee Midnitters.

Alice: Yes.

Nardwuar: Do you ever think of covering any of those bands, like Thee Midnitters’ “I Found a Peanut”?

Alice: [laughs] Oh, wow. No, I haven’t thought of covering them, but maybe I should. Now that I’m doing this, I’m thinking of trying cover versions of some of these songs that are popular in certain areas. Yet, a lot of people have never heard of Thee Midnitters. I really like “That’s All.” You know that song?

Nardwuar: I love all Thee Midnighters stuff. Yeah, it’s amazing. My favorite, I guess, is “I Found a Peanut.”

Alice: [laughs] Okay.

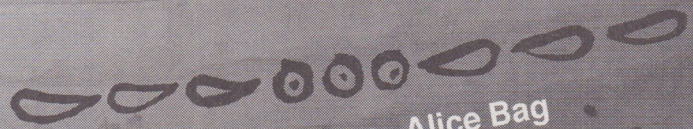
Nardwuar: Alice Bag, growing up, your family was involved in dumpster diving. What can you tell the people about that? Dumpster diving for fabric and then selling it at swap meets?

Alice: Well, my dad was a carpenter and he didn’t always find construction work, so there was a period of time where he was not getting any work. So we would go downtown to the garment district and my parents would hop into the dumpsters and pull out these rolls of fabric that might just have a couple yards left, or these big books of samples which were like bound books that had maybe a square about... a foot by a foot. My mom would rip out the squares, take them home, make quilts, and then we’d display them at the swap meet, and that’s how we made our living for a while.

Nardwuar: Downtown in L.A., there’s Clifton’s—it’s been there for years. What was Clifton’s like way back when and how does it differ from the way Clifton’s is today? It’s a legendary cafeteria. Was it always the same?

Alice: I don’t know what it’s like now. I don’t even know if it’s open anymore. We used to go on weekends, mostly, and there were usually religious people outside singing songs, playing tambourines, and calling you to come join the congregation. We’d make our way through that [laughs] and pick up a tray. And you walk in and there’s a waterfall and there are tables. It was like a tiered

Alice Bag



Nardwuar vs. Alice Bag
Photos by **Shanty Cheryl** and courtesy of alicebag.com
Transcription by **Rishbha Bhagi**
Art Junk by **Amy Adoyzie**



I ended up having to sing
 peeking out of this rip
 on the side instead
 of the proper
 eyeholes, which is
 how any decent
 band with bags on
 their heads is going
 to be singing.



dining area, so there were little balconies on either side. If you walked up to the very top level, the top floor was all red velvet curtains and red carpeting, and it looked really plush. And there was even a little chapel on the side where you could pray before you ate. So it was really, really a cool place.

Nardwuar: Alice Bag, in the book *Violence Girl*, there is some violence. Like a car chase that your dad took you on. That seemed frightening and wild.

Alice: Yeah, it was. My dad had a really bad temper and usually it was directed at my mother, but sometimes it was directed at other people. Just being in his presence when he was being violent, even if it wasn't toward you, it was just—it was a really ugly thing. It's scary. It's scary being in a car where the driver doesn't have control. My mother was driving and my father was stepping on her foot, trying to get her to run the red light so that he could catch somebody, so that he could beat him up. So it was frightening.

Nardwuar: And he did catch him.

Alice: Yeah. And he did punch him out.

Nardwuar: The amount of violence your dad showed toward your mom and family is pretty intense. Have you encountered other punk rockers who've had similar upbringings at all? Like, the amount of violence you encountered in your family really is unreal.

Alice: I don't know that people feel comfortable talking about it, or even maybe admitting it to themselves. I tried not to think about that stuff for a long time until I was writing the book. No, I didn't want to think about it. It's something uncomfortable to think about. So there were certain things that would trigger memories—if I saw a movie or TV show or something. I remember watching *Monster* and thinking, "I can relate to her"... just that fury, that rage. But I don't know what people have experienced because everybody is not writing a book and talking about it. But, for me, it seemed like it was just the depths of horror.

Nardwuar: Alice Bag, your book *Violence Girl* has so many great punk tidbits, but also so many great tidbits from you growing up. For instance, in your book, you talk about a guy in high school who chucked dog biscuits at you and then threw a school desk out the window and didn't get in trouble. And then you made him bleed. How come he didn't get in trouble for chucking a school desk out the window?

Alice: Because the teacher was afraid of him. The teacher was probably just trying to make it through the day and this guy was probably bigger than the teacher. I think he was actually taller than the teacher and much fiercer and angrier.

Nardwuar: But you weren't afraid to make him bleed, though. You actually made him bleed.

Alice: I actually did, but it was—you get to that point when you're angry where you don't even think about that kind of stuff. At least I do. Where it doesn't matter because something snaps and you're just gonna get that other person. No matter what happens

to you. It didn't matter at that point—I just wanted to stick my fingernails in his face and scratch it up.

Nardwuar: Did he bring the dog biscuits to school everyday with him? What were the dog biscuits doing there?

Alice: [laughs] I think he brought the dog biscuits to throw at me. I don't know what they were doing there, but... I don't know.

Nardwuar: Alice Bag, you also don't like Bic pens very much, do you?

Alice: [laughs] Yeah...

Nardwuar: You had some anger directed at a Bic pen. You got mad at a Bic pen, didn't you?

Alice: I got mad at the girl who was attached to the Bic pen. I was bullied a lot in school. I was kind of awkward and this girl would just torture me. She'd call me names and push me around. One day, I was walking up the steps toward the bathroom in junior high school and she shoved me. Again, something snapped and I just turned around automatically, without thinking about it, to push her back. As I turned around, I hit a pen that had happened to be in her mouth—I hit it with the flat side of my palm and shoved it into her throat, and her throat started bleeding.

Nardwuar: And afterwards you became the cause célèbre of the entire school, right? Everybody loved you for doing that?

Alice: Yeah, actually! [laughs] People treated me with a little more respect after that.

Nardwuar: Alice Bag, who was Hunch Butt?

Alice: Oh no! [laughs] Oh, that was that horrible nickname that I was given in junior high school.

Nardwuar: But you loved the nickname, didn't you? You mentioned in your book, *Violence Girl*, that you loved the nickname. You thought it was a clever nickname. You hated being called it, but you couldn't deny it was a good nickname?

Alice: I didn't love it. No, I hated it because it was funny, so people used it. If something doesn't have a bit of truth to it, it's not funny. That was clever and it was funny, and my butt sort of, you know, had that shape. [laughs] So unfortunately it fit, and people used it. But I did not love it. I hated it.

Nardwuar: And in the book *Violence Girl*, you remember so much with such detail. I love that you remember the Germs joke. Can you tell us the Germs joke that Darby told you? It's so awesome.

Alice: [laughs] Yeah. "Did you hear about the guy who got his left side cut off?"

Nardwuar: No.

Alice: "He's all right now."

Nardwuar: Ba-boom!

Alice: [laughs]

Nardwuar: And there's part two to that as well, right? This is really from Darby Crash, right?

Alice: This is really from Darby Crash.

Nardwuar: We're channeling him right now.

Alice: "Did you hear about the guy that got his right side cut off?"

Nardwuar: No.

Alice: "He's lucky to have what's left."

Nardwuar: Ba-BOOM! Did you use that on stage at all for stage banter?

Alice: No, but I did repeat it to all my friends for a long time, because it was so funny.

Nardwuar: When Darby was ripping your bag off your head—because when you were in The Bags, a lot of times in the early gigs you wore bags on your head—that was kinda mean, wasn't it? Was Darby kinda mean or was that just something he would do to everybody?

Alice: Oh god no, he was not mean. During those days, he was really, really sweet, and was mostly just drunk and wanted to hang on people. And, as a matter of fact, I would go to his shows and pull on his clothes, so it was payback. It was sort of something he did in fun.

Nardwuar: But he liked that though, you were saying. He liked that happening. You didn't really like having the bag pulled off your head.

Alice: I didn't like the bag pulled off my head. He really didn't want me to wear a bag. We were pretty good friends and he thought he knew better. So he told me, "If you wear a bag on your head, I'm gonna rip it off." The first time we stepped on stage, he started pulling at it. Eventually he ripped a big chunk out of the side of my bag, and I ended up having to sing peeking out of this rip on the side instead of the proper eyeholes, which is how any decent band with bags on their heads is going to be singing.

Nardwuar: Alice Bag from The Bags and also author of *Violence Girl*, Sherwood Schwartz from *Gilligan's Island* was Elton John's body double decoy?

Alice: [laughs] No! No, he happened to be at the Santa Monica Civic on the day when we were stalking Elton. I was a big-time Elton John stalker, so I found out that Elton was going to be at the Santa Monica Civic and my friends and I waited outside. We tried to get on the premises and we were being constantly run off by the guards. But one of the people who actually talked to us was Sherwood Schwartz, and he was really nice. Again, it was sort of like that Michael Jackson thing where he just wanted to know what these young girls were up to, hanging out, laughing, you know.

Nardwuar: Alice Bag from The Bags, did you invent the term "douchebag"?

Alice: I didn't invent it. I didn't.

Nardwuar: Was that a very early instance of the word "douchebag"? Because you were Douche Bag before a lot of people were douchebags, right?

Alice: I was. And I was a proud douchebag, too. All the members of The Bags took the last name "Bag," but then it wasn't enough for us so we decided to name ourselves a particular type of bag. Patricia was Trash Bag, Craig Lee was Bag Teria, Terry, who we call Dad, was Bag Dad, and... what was Rob Ritter? Oh my goodness. Rob Ritter played guitar with us and... oh, of course I'm gonna forget...

Nardwuar: Shopping Bag?

Alice: Yes! Thank you! And I was Douche Bag. [laughs] I love it that you know the answers.

Nardwuar: Alice Bag, author of *Violence Girl*, did Freddy Mercury inadvertently cause

Patricia Morrison—Pat Bag's—finger to get chopped off?

Alice: I don't know if Freddie Mercury caused it. He did hand her a glass from the stage, and perhaps may have looked at her and looked at someone else at the same time or a second later. But Patricia had a glass of wine in her hand. Another girl who thought it was for her grabbed it out of her hand and ended up cutting a big chunk of Patricia's finger off. But we had front row center seats for that show. We were like, eight feet away from Freddie Mercury, which was really exciting for us. We'd spent the night at the local scalper's shop, and when we got in, we were the first people in. Those were the best seats I've ever had for a concert. But look what it cost us!

Nardwuar: What did it cost you?

Alice: It cost us a big chunk of Patricia's finger. She couldn't play for months after that.

Nardwuar: Alice Bag, is the song by The Bags "We Don't Need No English" about Zippers?

Alice: Oh, wow! No, it's not. "We Don't Need No English" was written by Craig Lee and it was in reaction to, I believe, a Stranglers song. I can't tell you the whole story because I didn't write the song, but it was something negative that was said about Americans and Craig Lee was reacting to that.

Nardwuar: I thought it was about your friend Mr. Zippers, the Brit.

Alice: No, but I do remember Zippers.

Nardwuar: There's great footage of The Bags playing in Portland, Oregon on YouTube that people can check out like, right now. Amazing footage. Is that the gig that Jello Biafra is in the audience? Do you know the footage I'm referring to?

Alice: I do. And, yes, Jello was there. They (Dead Kennedys) were actually supposed to do some of those shows. I think they were supposed to play the Iggy Pop show in Seattle and possibly The Long Goodbye in Portland, also. I don't remember what the reason was that they weren't on the bill, but Jello was there and he was really supportive. Jello was always great to have around because he's just fun.

Nardwuar: You were saying in your book *Violence Girl* that perhaps it maybe wasn't your best gig or best tour, but you guys look totally on it. I loved it!

Alice: Oh, thank you. No, it was the tour that happened right before we broke up, and I felt like we were all on edge.

Nardwuar: In the movie *The Decline of Western Civilization*, the Alice Bag pad is featured. You'd mentioned about fighting happening backstage before you went on. Wasn't there punk unity? Why was there fighting?

Alice: I think there was no punk unity at that particular time. People wanted to be filmed early in the evening because there were a lot of bands that were on that bill. I think there were five bands and nobody wanted to go on last because it was being filmed, it was late, everything was running later than normal, and we all had kind of figured out that people would be tired by the fifth band.

I think I was the only woman backstage at that point and I was also probably the one who had been around the longest, so they listened to me. I said, "Let's not fight. Let's draw straws!" We drew the short straw and ended up going on fifth, which was really unfortunate because we were out of steam, the audience was out of steam. I could not stand to look at *The Decline*. If it's showing, I can be in the same room with it, but I try not to watch it because I have a hard time just watching that show. It's difficult for me. I'm not happy with our performance, not happy with the whole thing.

Nardwuar: Alice Bag, did you ever meet Jack LaLanne?

Alice: No, I wish! [laughs]

Nardwuar: You worked for him for a couple years, right?

Alice: I did. I was an exercise instructor and I was in very good health at the time. I worked at the Miracle Mile (mid-city L.A.) and we did twelve-hour shifts every other day, because at that time women and men had to have different workout days. I eventually quit. But the whole story is in my book, *Violence Girl*.

Nardwuar: Alice Bag, you were a great fan of The Weirdos from Los Angeles.

Alice: Yeah, I still am. They're always gonna be my favorite punk band, I think. I just have an emotional attachment to them.

Nardwuar: Alice Bag, was the fight between Nicky from The Weirdos and Tom Waits really a draw?

Alice: I think it was. It was eventually busted up by the bouncers who were surrounding us.

Nardwuar: Maybe a bit of background on that. It sounds kind of interesting. I love the idea that a fight was actually set up. What happened?

Alice: Yes. Well, what happened was that Tom Waits had made a disparaging remark about Nicky Beat—he called him a dipshit. Oh, I'm sorry!

Nardwuar: That's okay. In the Nardwuar Human Serviette Radio Show, you can say "dipshit."

Alice: Okay. [laughs] So... what else can I say? Because then I could tell you the whole conversation.

Nardwuar: Oh, please, go for it.

Alice: [laughs] So, Tom Waits knew that we were going to be playing. He had met me and I was very friendly, because I had no idea that he was going to turn out to be a jerk. So I invited him to The Bags' show at the Troubadour, and later he went on to make the comment about Nicky. So he showed up to watch The Bags at the Troubadour and Nicky Beat was playing drums with us because we had lost our drummer. When Nicky found out that Tom was in the audience he was really, really mad, and before we even played, we walked up on the stage, we're all getting ready to play, and Nicky went up to the microphone and called him a "bloody cunt."

Tom just sat there, looking at him—he didn't react. We started playing and our fans started—in those days, you had these rock clubs that had long sets of tables and chairs

lined up to the front of the stage so that people would have a two or three drink minimum. They would be the people who were sitting at the front of the stage. But of course, our fans didn't have that kind of money, so they just proceeded to throw the chairs and the tables out of the way so they could pogo.

The band starts playing, tables and chairs are flying, and at the end of the night... well, Tom Waits, first of all, is just sitting there. Stoic. He's watching the band, refusing to move, he's not having fun, he's just glaring at Nicky. At the end of the night, the show's over, the club is destroyed except for the one little area where Tom Waits and his friends are sitting, the premises are vacated, we're getting ready to move our stuff out, and they lock us in. We don't know what's happening. We don't know if they're going to hold us responsible or take away our equipment or what they're gonna do, but it turns out that all they really wanted was for Tom Waits and Nicky Beats to have it out. So these bouncers from the club make a big circle around Nicky and Tom, and they start duking it out.

Nardwuar: So did the bouncers decide that they should duke it out? Like, say Tom didn't wanna fight Nicky.

Alice: Yeah maybe, I don't know. I think Tom did wanna fight Nicky, though. Tom was very aggressive. He called me a whore, actually. He was yelling at me too, because I was apparently to blame for whatever had happened.

Nardwuar: Has his side of the story ever come out at all? Has he ever been confronted about this?

Alice: I think it's been confronted, but I don't think he's ever given his side of the story. I'm curious.

Nardwuar: And that's one of the tidbits you'll get in *Violence Girl*, isn't it, Alice?

Alice: Yeah! And you'll get it in more detail.

Nardwuar: Alice Bag, Nicky from The Weirdos and filling in with The Bags, he saved all the packaging from all the meals he ever ate with you?

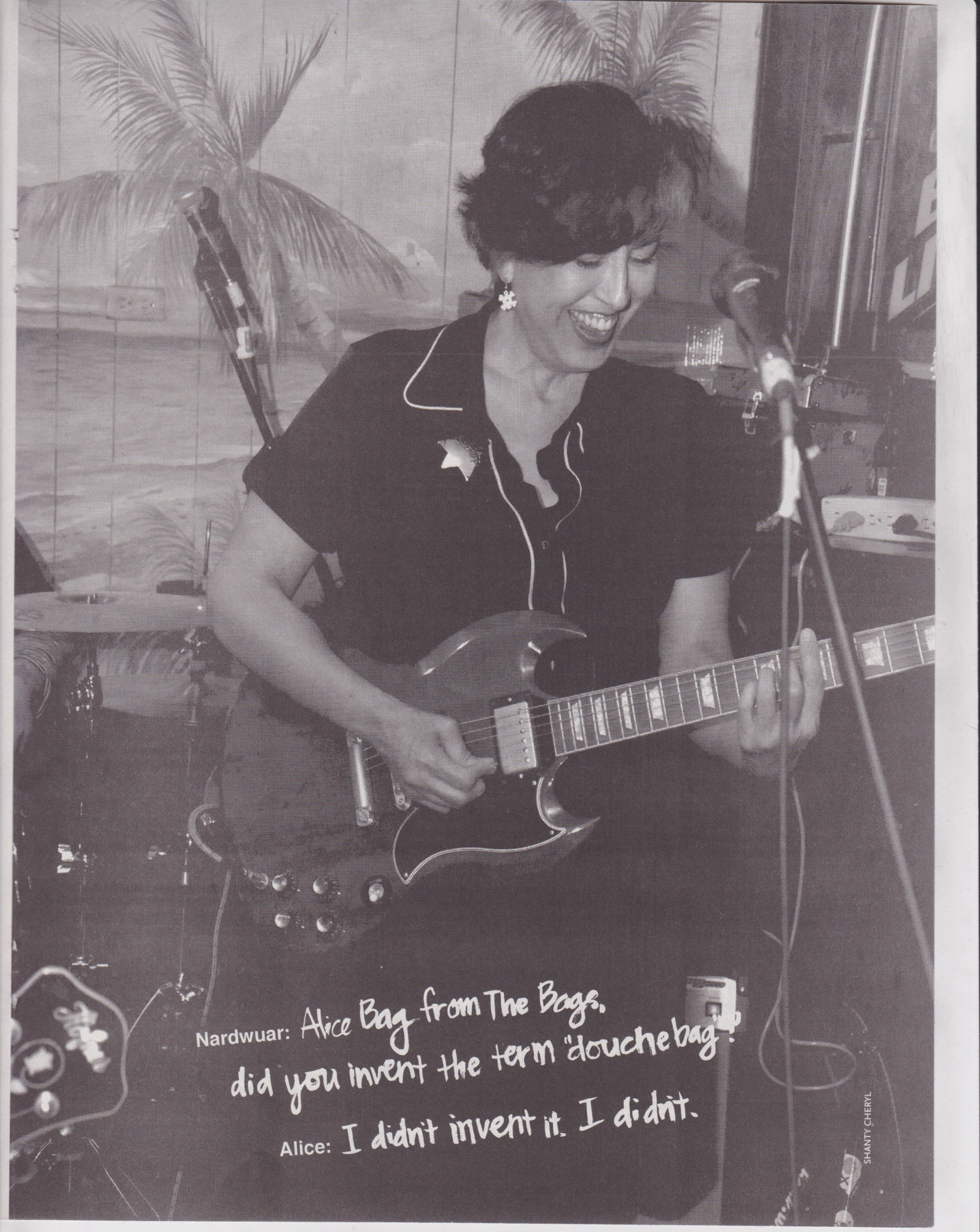
Alice: Well, there were an awful lot of packages in the cupboards. I don't know if it was every single package, but there were boxes and jars... jars full of water, like Ragu, peanut butter and all that, they were rinsed and nicely lined up in the cupboards of our apartment.

Nardwuar: So he's like an early purveyor of recycling, maybe, or something like that.

Alice: Perhaps. Yeah, and all the cereal boxes were folded neatly and stacked up like books in a library.

Nardwuar: Which kind of freaked you out because you didn't think that everything was kept, you thought it was just chucked out.

Alice: Yeah, it was funny because Nicky had to have things his way, and one of the things he had to have his way was that he had to make all the meals. Which, you know... [laughs] That's fine with me. So he wouldn't let me in the kitchen. He did all the cooking and he'd just ask me to come in and eat. He had to wash the dishes and do everything, because he wanted it done his way. And he

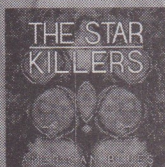
A black and white photograph of Alice Bag, a member of the band The Bags. She is smiling and playing a dark-colored electric guitar while singing into a microphone. She is wearing a dark short-sleeved shirt with white piping and a small star-shaped pin on the left side. The background features a mural of palm trees and a building. A drum set is partially visible on the left.

Nardwuar: Alice Bag from The Bags.
did you invent the term "douchebag"?

Alice: I didn't invent it. I didn't.

FLY THE LIGHT

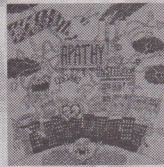
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I was a total failure at working at Arby's.

had to do the laundry because it had to be rinsed twice because he could feel detergent on his body.

All those things that Nicky wanted to do just happened to be the things that I don't particularly mind giving up. So it worked out really nicely until we broke up and then that's when I discovered the jars and boxes and stuff. I think it was kinda funny.

Nardwuar: Alice Bag, you met Sid Vicious onstage. Is that when you first met him?

Alice: That was my only introduction to Sid Vicious, yes. He was in the audience when we played in San Francisco. We played the Mabuhay around the same time. We set up a gig specifically because we wanted to see the Sex Pistols play, and we wanted our trip to pay for itself, so we set up a show.

Nardwuar: Which is kinda genius. I was thinking, when you mentioned that in the book, that all the clubs would've been booked. Were other bands trying to do that or were you the only people that were that crafty?

Alice: Oh, I don't know. I didn't do the booking. Craig Lee did the booking, so he's the clever one. It just turned out that he and my friend Helen showed up...

Nardwuar: Wait a second, we gotta go back here. Your friend Helen—come on!

Alice: Helen Killer.

Nardwuar: The legendary Helen Killer.

Alice: The legendary Helen Killer. Yeah, she was hanging out with Sid and she brought him to our show, and it was wonderful. I was onstage and Sid was bopping his head to our music and all of a sudden he just decided that he wanted to be up there. He started to roll around on the stage, and I describe his dance

as sort of a kitten playing with a ball of yarn because he was kinda kicking his legs and his little paws up in the air. After he rolled around for a while, he got up and he came over and put his arm around me, and tried to grab the microphone to sing along with me. But I wouldn't let go of the mic. I was still thinking, "This is a Bags show, I'm gonna keep singing." Sid just kinda hung onto me and swayed around the stage with me, which was, of course, just amazing for me. I was a fan too, so it was really exciting.

Nardwuar: Did you know it was Sid Vicious though, and not an imposter?

Alice: I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that it was Sid Vicious.

Nardwuar: And how did Helen meet Sid?

Alice: I think Helen met Sid because the Plungers had actually gone to Texas, I think, to see them at an earlier show and they'd met them there.

Nardwuar: Alice Bag—blood. You were into cutting yourself quite a bit.

Alice: Yeah, there was a time in my life where I felt disconnected from humanity, and I felt like cutting myself just made me feel like I was alive. I know it doesn't make any sense, but for some reason it just maybe made me aware of my body, made me aware of pain, and it was a time when I felt like I couldn't even feel pain. I felt very numb. So I started cutting myself. I was having a hard time dealing with a lot of different things. I eventually stopped cutting myself. I moved back home, went to school, and started just being more introspective and figuring out what was going on with me. I gave up cutting.

Nardwuar: Did you ever get a Germs burn?

Alice: No, I was offered a Germs burn. Darby tried very hard to burn me, but I threatened his life. [laughs] I would not allow him to burn me.

Nardwuar: Alice Bag, what was it like working at Arby's in the 1970s? Do you have any trade secrets you can tell us?

Alice: Trade secrets... no, I don't have any trade secrets. I was a total failure at working at Arby's. I got fired. I didn't particularly enjoy it. I tried to trade my roommate, Sheila, a shift, but neither of us ended up showing up and we got fired. It was a place that would have us, basically. If you were a punk and you looked and dressed funny, or if you had a weird haircut or different colored hair, it was difficult to get a job. So if a place would have you, you were lucky and you tried to keep it for a few weeks so you could pay your rent.

Nardwuar: Because that made me think about money and stuff, Alice Bag. Like, who from the L.A. punk scene actually made money and a living off it?

Alice: I don't know who made money. I know that for a while The Bags made enough money so that we could pay our rent. We did support ourselves through the band for a short time. Let me clarify that I had two roommates. I lived at the Canterbury—I don't remember what the rent was there, but it was really cheap and we split it three ways. I didn't really have spending money. So I was able to live, but on very little. I don't think anybody was making a whole lotta money. I remember The Dickies got a record deal and had regular checks once a month or something. We all thought they had it made.

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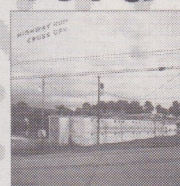
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Nardwuar: Alice Bag, the Elk's Lodge—your friend Barbara was accused of doing angel dust?

Alice: Yeah.

Nardwuar: What was happening there? You were playing a gig at the Elk's Lodge and all this craziness was going down. You were trying to warn the people but you didn't get to warn them. Then Barbara jumped outside and fought off some cops with a stop sign?

Alice: Yeah. What happened was there were a lot of bands playing the Elk's Lodge, and I guess the neighbors were afraid because we looked... scary. [laughs] They didn't know what punks were about, and apparently the LAPD claims to have gotten complaints. The Go-Go's had played first and after they played, I went down to the ladies' room.

When I was walking back, I noticed that there was a phalanx of storm troopers outside. There were like, cops in riot gear lined up as far back as you could see. I was trying to get back to my friends. There were friends of mine who were in the lobby who I managed to warn and say, "We gotta get outta here because this place is gonna be broken up." Right after I said that, the head policeman walked in and started trying to get us to disperse. It all happened really fast. They ordered us to disperse, but within two or three minutes the line after line of policemen started marching in, just clubbing people randomly, as people were trying to leave.

We're trying to get down the stairs and people are just being whacked for no reason at all. We're trying to leave peacefully, and Barbara's sister, Dorothy and her boyfriend Jeff Atta, who was the lead singer of Middle Class, were bashed over the head and their scalps were torn open. They were bleeding profusely. Barbara saw that happen and she got really angry and she started fighting with the cops. So they handcuffed her and she broke her handcuffs and went after them again, because she felt like she had to try to defend her sister. So they hog-tied her and she broke her restraints again. I don't know how she did it, but she was able to pull up a stop sign and swing at the cops with it. I think she must've just had a huge rush of adrenaline, because Barbara didn't do drugs. She never did.

Nardwuar: Vancouver is home to Ron Reyes now, of Black Flag. He's been living here for a number of years. I was wondering, Alice, did you ever play any gigs with Ron Reyes? Because he's in *The Decline*, too.

Alice: Yeah, I think they were filmed the same night we were, if I'm not mistaken. I think they were also filmed at the Smokestack.

Nardwuar: What do you remember about Black Flag, Ron Reyes era?

Alice: I don't remember very much about it. I think at that time I was just more concerned with my own band falling apart, so I wasn't that involved. This was a new scene that was moving in. This was a transitional phase when the old Hollywood

scene was kinda starting to fade. These new bands were coming in and they were much more popular, more forceful. I didn't have the same kind of connection with Ron that I would've had with people that I'd known for the previous years. So I don't know if that makes any sense to you at all, but I wasn't close to Ron or most of the bands that went on to do hardcore, even though we were playing with some of those bands. I didn't feel the same sense of community with them that I had with the early Hollywood punk bands.

Nardwuar: Anything else you wanna add to the people out there at all?

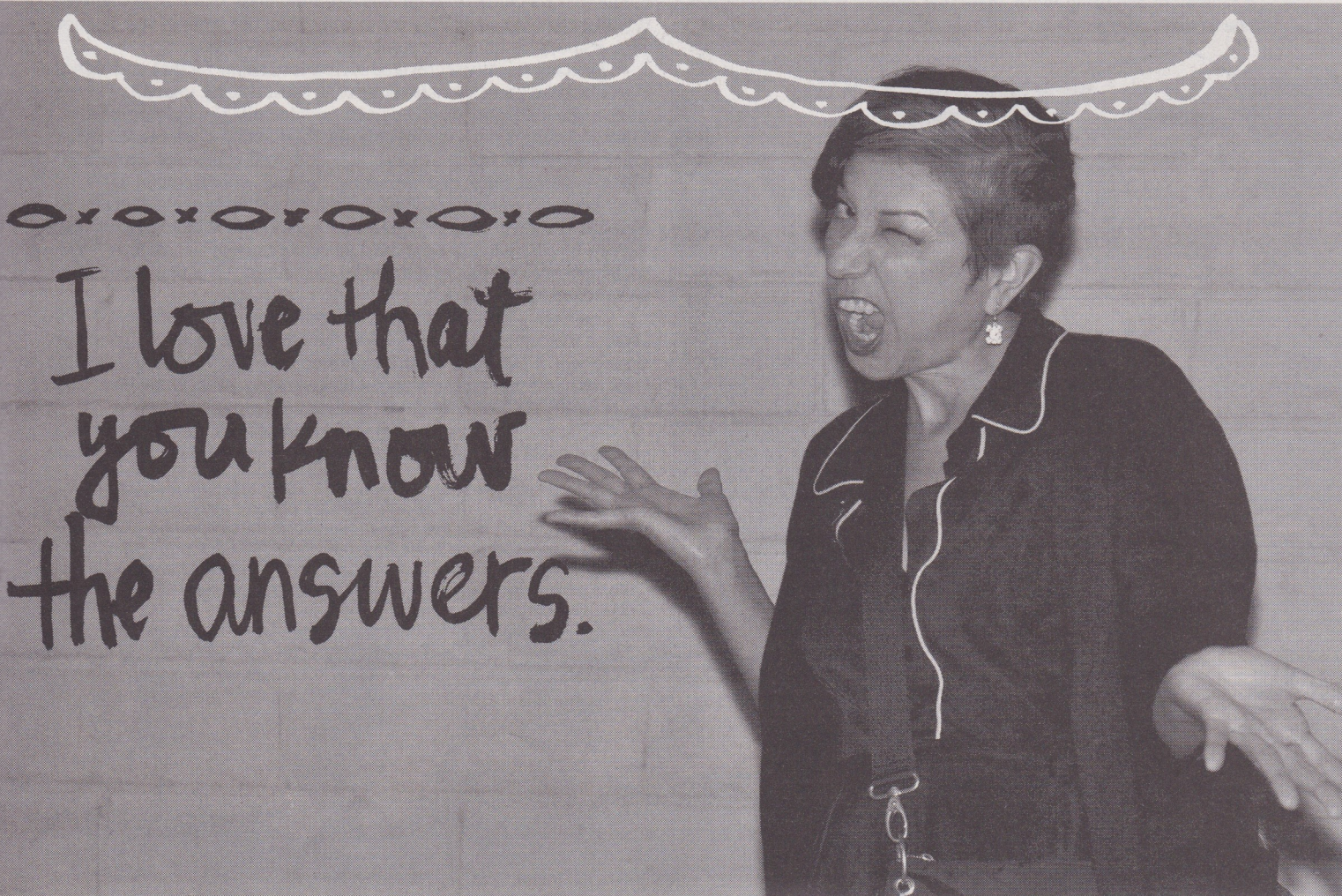
Alice: No, there's nothing else I can think of.

Nardwuar: And lastly, lastly, lastly, can you please tell me your recipe for chocolate chip cookies?

Alice: I can send you my recipe for chocolate chip cookies, but the trick, the special touch if you're making them for someone that you need to get back at, is to replace the chocolate chips with Ex Lax.

Nardwuar: All right! Well, thanks so much, Alice. Keep on rockin' in the free world and doot doola doot doo...

Alice: Doot doo!



WAR AND THE AMERICAN ELITE

BY CHRIS PEPUS / DESIGNED BY MARS BRAVO

This year marks the tenth anniversary of George W. Bush's invasion of Iraq. The war's horrific toll is still being discovered. To date, 4,488 American troops died in Operation Iraqi Freedom, according to the Department of Defense. The best estimate* for the number of Iraqis killed as a result of the war comes from leading British medical journal *The Lancet*. The figure is 654,965 dead. That count does not include deaths that took place after July 2006. Neither figure includes U.S. civilians or nationals of other countries who died in the conflict. Nor do they account for soldiers or civilians who were wounded or for Iraqis who were tortured in U.S. detention centers.

As for the war's cost to the U.S. economy, two leading economists—Joseph Stiglitz (winner of the Nobel Prize) and Linda Bilmes—produced a 2008 study placing it at \$3 trillion. Of course, not everyone suffered from the war. Oil companies received colossal profits when the price of their product more than tripled. Defense contractors such as Halliburton (where Dick Cheney served as chief executive officer) also achieved huge financial gains.

As the 10-year anniversary passed, corporate media took time to look back, reflect, and try out some new excuses for publishing lies to support the case for war. This past March, for instance, *The Washington Post* published a piece by Paul Farhi on whether the press failed in its prewar coverage of Iraq. You might think that is a simple question. The Bush administration and prominent media outlets claimed that Saddam Hussein had ties to al-Qaeda and was involved in the 9/11 attacks. They also warned that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction and was on its way to acquiring more, including nuclear weapons. Of course, none of that was true.

Did the media fail? “‘Failure’ grossly oversimplifies what the media did and didn’t do before the war,” Farhi explained. “Thousands of news stories and columns published before the war described and debated the administration’s plans and statements, and not all of them were supportive.” Apparently, the news people can only be judged as failures if every story turns out to be bullshit. The propaganda ministries in history’s worst totalitarian regimes could have beaten that standard.

In further defense of his colleagues, Farhi protested that “it wasn’t impossible for skeptics of the war to connect the dots.” Shouldn’t we assess the media’s performance based on what the average person learned or didn’t learn from the news? If you already had to be a skeptic to “connect the dots,” then what chance was there for people who lacked specific knowledge of the issues—and who sought that knowledge from their news providers? The only problem with applying the word “failure” to the actions of corporate media outlets is it implies that they intended to find and tell the truth in the first place.

Journalist Greg Mitchell has reported that *The Washington Post* recently asked him to write a piece assessing press coverage of the case for war. But Mitchell stated that the paper killed his article, which was critical of the media and ran Paul Farhi’s instead. The “failures” continue.

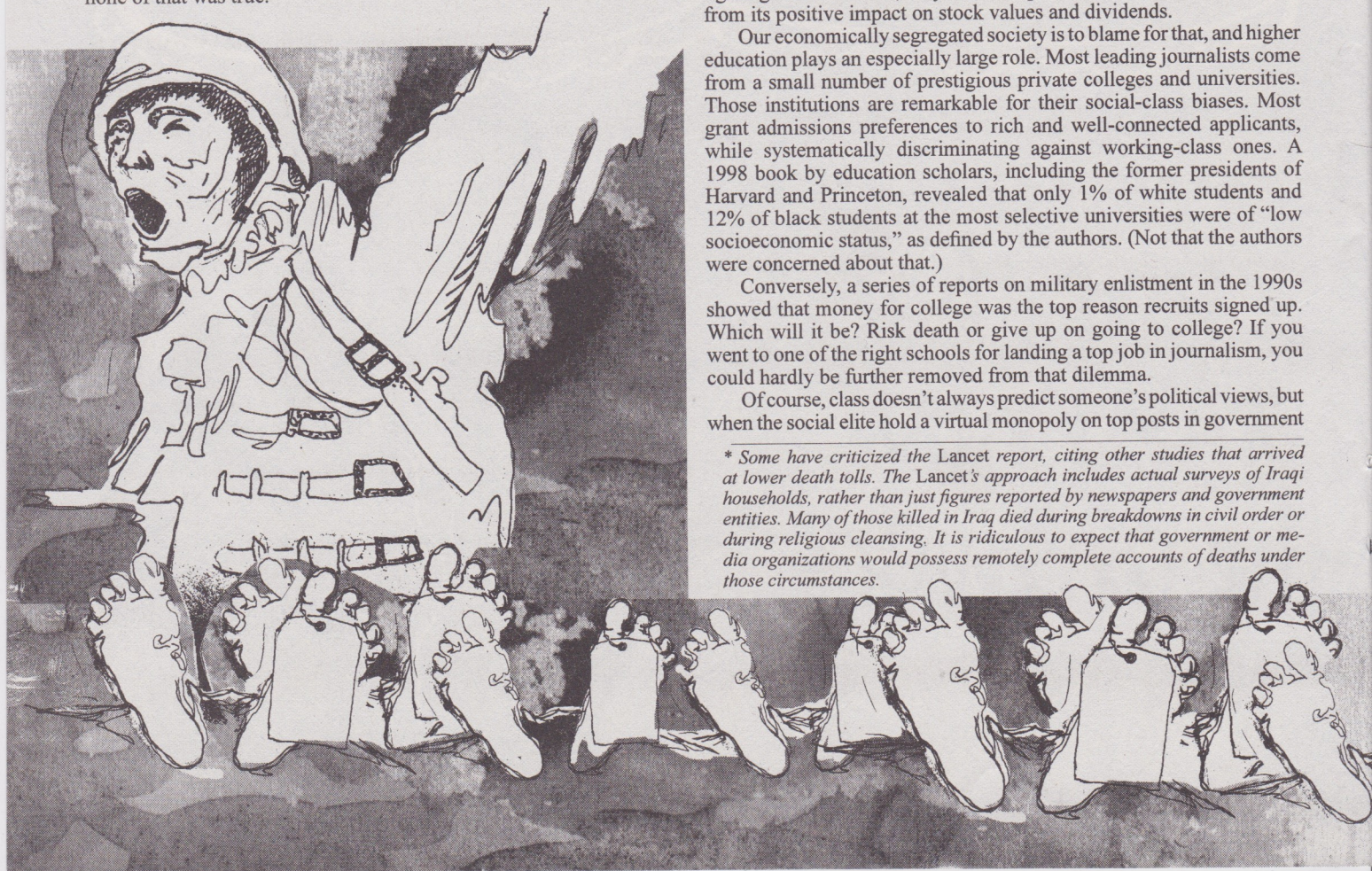
Some writers have offered explanations for the media’s eagerness to rubber-stamp the Bush White House’s lies. These include ownership of news companies by giant corporate conglomerates and reporters’ reliance on access to government sources. Those are important parts of the story, but no one seems to have noticed that, like the Bush clan, top media-makers come from the war-profiting class rather than the war-fighting class. As such, they are exempt from the costs of war but not from its positive impact on stock values and dividends.

Our economically segregated society is to blame for that, and higher education plays an especially large role. Most leading journalists come from a small number of prestigious private colleges and universities. Those institutions are remarkable for their social-class biases. Most grant admissions preferences to rich and well-connected applicants, while systematically discriminating against working-class ones. A 1998 book by education scholars, including the former presidents of Harvard and Princeton, revealed that only 1% of white students and 12% of black students at the most selective universities were of “low socioeconomic status,” as defined by the authors. (Not that the authors were concerned about that.)

Conversely, a series of reports on military enlistment in the 1990s showed that money for college was the top reason recruits signed up. Which will it be? Risk death or give up on going to college? If you went to one of the right schools for landing a top job in journalism, you could hardly be further removed from that dilemma.

Of course, class doesn’t always predict someone’s political views, but when the social elite hold a virtual monopoly on top posts in government

* Some have criticized the Lancet report, citing other studies that arrived at lower death tolls. The Lancet’s approach includes actual surveys of Iraqi households, rather than just figures reported by newspapers and government entities. Many of those killed in Iraq died during breakdowns in civil order or during religious cleansing. It is ridiculous to expect that government or media organizations would possess remotely complete accounts of deaths under those circumstances.



and media, politics gets reduced to promoting the interests of the rich. Need I point out that George W. Bush is the poster child for hereditary privilege? After graduating from prep school, Bush followed numerous ancestors by enrolling at Yale University, despite his obvious difficulties with rational thought and the English language. Bush's presidency is best understood as a medieval royal court, where longtime family servants of the House of Bush, like Dick Cheney, bled the peasants.

Servants in corporate media joined in as well, and a look at the backgrounds of top media-makers will help us understand why. The relentless push for war by Fox News Channel is explained easily enough. That network is the fiefdom of Rupert Murdoch, who got his start as a press mogul when he inherited a group of newspapers from his father, Sir Keith Murdoch. Murdoch's media have campaigned for pro-rich, far-right policies in every country where they set up shop, launching vicious campaigns against their political opponents or just everyday people. As you may have heard, some of Murdoch's British reporters got caught running their own spy network, hacking into phones, including one belonging to a thirteen-year-old murder victim. In response to that scandal, a committee of Britain's House of Commons issued a report in 2012 concluding that Murdoch was "not a fit person to exercise the stewardship of a major international company." Now they tell us.

Hereditary succession is common among rightists in the media. John Podhoretz is editor of *Commentary* magazine, a job once held by his father. Likewise, L. Brent Bozell III, a conservative commentator and pollster, is the son of L. Brent Bozell Jr., a crony of right-wing icon William F. Buckley Jr. from the days when the two were students at Yale. All of these country-club philosophers supported invading Iraq.

War-mongering and far-right punditry are big business these days, just as they were in the 1950s.

Another aristocrat of the right is prep-school and Harvard graduate William Kristol, whose father Irving, was a famous conservative writer and editor. (Among the magazines Irving edited was *Encounter*, which was funded by the CIA.) During the year or so before the attack on Iraq, Kristol the Younger hyped the coming war relentlessly, offering memorable promises of easy victory. Here are just a few:

"American and alliance forces will be welcomed in Baghdad as liberators."

"This is going to be a two-month war, not a year war."

"Very few wars in American history were prepared better or more thoroughly than this one by this president."

Shortly after the war started, Kristol dismissed concerns that Iraq's deep divisions between Sunni and Shia Muslims would lead to sectarian violence. He blamed those worries on "a kind of pop sociology in America that, you know, somehow the Shia can't get along with the Sunni." Someone should have told the Sunni and Shia that, because a bloody wave of religious cleansing swept Iraq after the U.S. invasion.

You probably won't be surprised to learn that Kristol also smeared opponents of the war as disloyal. In that task, as in others, he was simply carrying on the family business. In 2002, he wrote:

"But the American people, whatever their doubts about aspects of Bush's foreign policy, know that Bush is serious about fighting terrorists and terrorist states that mean America harm. About Bush's Democratic critics, they know no such thing."

Journalist Eric Alterman noticed a striking similarity between that passage and one written by Kristol's father. In 1952, the elder Kristol praised Senator Joseph McCarthy (R., Wis.), who lodged countless false accusations of communist spying against Americans who were far more loyal to the country than he was. Here's Irving Kristol's tribute to McCarthy:

"For there is one thing that the American people know about Senator McCarthy: he, like them, is unequivocally anti-Communist. About the spokesmen for American liberalism, they feel they know no such thing."

War-mongering and far-right punditry are big business these days, just as they were in the 1950s. In the case of the Kristols, we see the shameful spectacle of a hereditary elite quoting its own lies across generations.

When Fareed Zakaria endorsed Bush's invasion plan, he lent credibility to the argument for war. Zakaria was less stridently conservative than the usual parade of right-wingers on Fox News Channel. He also possessed greater cosmopolitan credentials than many other war-backers. An immigrant from India, Zakaria had edited the prestigious journal *Foreign Affairs* and met numerous world leaders.

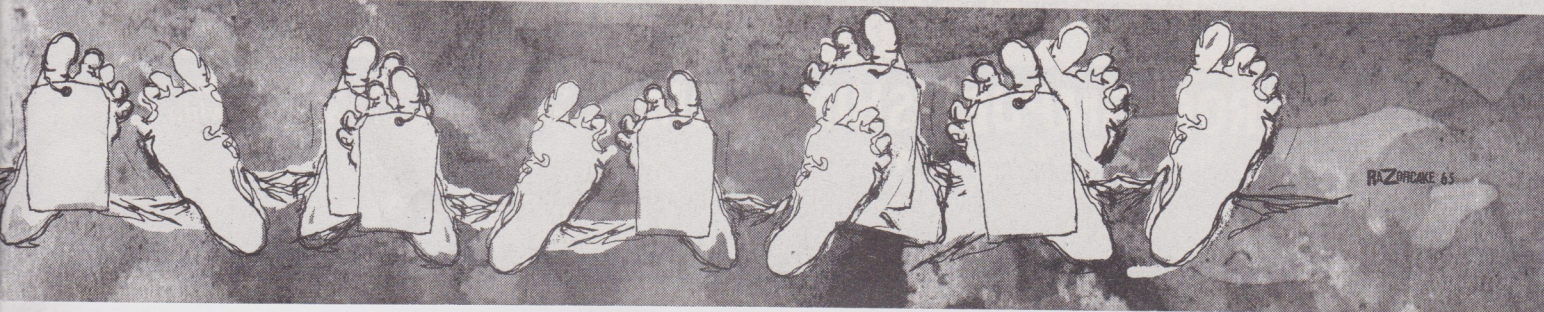
In an interview with *New York* magazine shortly before the start of the war, Zakaria explained why he agreed with Bush. "[Iraq] is so dysfunctional, any stirring of the pot is good. America's involvement in the region is for the good." In other words: Oh, what the hell? Why not? Just stir the pot and see what happens. Zakaria's words do not spring from a careful weighing of the consequences of war—for the soldiers who fight it or the civilians who become "collateral damage." They are the words of a rich kid haphazardly deciding to place a bet at the roulette wheel. To Zakaria, Iraq was just a game, a puzzle of

dysfunction that the U.S. elite might be able to solve by tossing other people's lives and money into it.

Like George W. Bush, Fareed Zakaria inherited his place in the game. His father was a high-ranking politician and his mother was a newspaper editor. After graduating from prep school, Zakaria received degrees from Yale and Harvard. Referring to his privileged upbringing, he told *New York*, "I grew up in this world where everything seemed possible." "We saw the best architects, government officials, and poets all the time," he added. "Nothing seemed out of your reach." That was the problem. Coverage of the war debate would have been better if the media's anointed "experts" had come from a world of limited possibilities or had experience dealing with the consequences of destructive policies.

Liberal writers and media outlets also played an enormous role in building the fraudulent case for war. In fact, Bush & Co.'s preferred means of planting false information in the public mind was *The New York Times*—and, specifically, reporter Judith Miller. Here is a short list of bogus claims presented as true in *Times* articles either written or co-written by Miller.

1. Saddam Hussein was seeking components for nuclear weapons.
2. Saddam already had an array of chemical weapons, including anthrax.
3. The Iraqi military was attempting to make a biological weapon using smallpox.



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Top media-makers come from the war-profiting class rather than the war-fighting class.

The Bush gang's puppeteering of Miller was so tightly controlled that on September 8, 2002, when another set of their planted lies appeared in the *Times* under Miller's name, Dick Cheney went on *Meet the Press* to tout the article. "There's a story in *The New York Times* this morning," Cheney said, wearing his somber face. "And I want to attribute the *Times*." Say "*Times*" again, Dick.

For her part, Miller later looked back on her false reports and said this: "If your sources are wrong, you're going to be wrong." Actually, the last time I checked, journalists were supposed to assess the credibility of their sources.

Why did Miller align herself so closely with the administration? Also, how did someone with so little understanding of how journalism works rise to a top position at *The New York Times*? While you're pondering those questions, allow me to mention that Miller is a graduate of Barnard College, an expensive, private women's institution in Manhattan, affiliated with Columbia University. She also obtained a master's degree from Princeton.

After Miller's reporting was exposed as a sick joke, *NYT* management initially defended her. But criticism of Miller grew so widespread that she ultimately resigned and took a job on Fox News Channel. Sources at the *Times* stated that Miller had been specially protected by the newspaper's publisher, Arthur Sulzberger Jr., who inherited that post from his father. Doug McGill, a former reporter at the *Times*, said in 2005, "Arthur's social closeness to Judy is making it hard for him to see things clearly." I like that word choice. "Social closeness" sums up not only the politics of the *NYT* but the larger problem of corporate media's cozy relationship with the Bushites.

Let's consider the case of another liberal in the front rank of the media's war lobby. Bill Keller is a longtime writer and editor at *The New York Times*. In February 2003, Keller wrote a piece titled "The I-Can't-Believe-I'm-a-Hawk Club," in which he discussed how prominent liberals were giving Bush political cover during the march to war. "The president will take us to war with support—often, I admit, equivocal and patronizing in tone—from quite a few members of the East Coast liberal media cabal." (It figures: a *NYT* writer finally apologizes for the patronizing attitudes of East Coast liberals, and the recipient of the apology is George W. Bush.)

All you need to know about Keller's reasoning in the column is illustrated by this passage:

"We are hard pressed to see an alternative [to war] that is not built on wishful thinking. Thanks to all these grudging [liberal] allies, Mr. Bush will be able to claim, with justification, that the coming war is a far cry from the rash, unilateral adventure some of his advisers would have settled for."

Keller condemned wishful thinking and then allowed himself to fancy that liberal support for Bush's war prevented it from being a "rash, unilateral adventure." It seems that, in Keller's mind, he and his colleagues formed a sort of magical ankle-bracelet clinging to George W. Bush, radiating an aura of benevolence and consensus.

Such narcissism and illogic are hardly surprising, but they don't get to the root of Keller's war-mongering. Again, the writer's class background may offer an explanation. Unlike many other top liberals in Bush's war chorus, Keller is not an Ivy Leaguer. But he is a member of the You'd-Better-Believe-I'm-One-of-the-Elite Club: his father was chief executive officer of Chevron.

Here are some key events and dates to consider when weighing Keller's contributions to the war debate. On the day Bush ordered the invasion of Iraq, the benchmark price of a barrel of oil stood at \$30.01. Five years later, the price was \$103.25. In 2003, Chevron reported an annual profit of \$7.23 billion. In 2007, the company's annual profit was \$18.68 billion. And here are two other facts that might warrant being placed next to each other. In January 2003, executives from major oil companies, including Chevron, met with Dick Cheney to discuss what to do with Iraq's oil. (Chevron later turned out to be a major winner in the race to acquire new Iraqi oil contracts.) The following month, Keller's "I-Can't-Believe-I'm-a-Hawk" column came out.

In July 2003, Keller rose to the rank of executive editor of the *Times*, a position he held until 2011. With gas prices skyrocketing, editor Keller published news articles blaming that development on "speculators," rather than, say, a relentless effort by the Bushites and oil executives to craft policies that increased Big Oil's profits. Having provided such journalistic service to his country (or should that be "company"?), Keller now advocates bombing Syria and cutting Social Security. There is no word yet on whether he is still surprising himself.

Looking back to the eve of the Iraq War, we see a group portrait of the social elite at its most incestuous. Some of that group held positions in government. Others were in the media. Still others sat on the boards of giant corporations. But those distinctions mattered little. Whatever sector of society they officially occupied, members of the elite closed ranks to ensure yet another round of profitable carnage.



Chris Pepus has written for *Razorcake* since 2003. His parents were manual laborers during their working lives and Chris was the first in his family to attend college thanks to financial aid. He holds a BA and an MA from a public university. He was opposed to the invasion of Iraq, and his opposition did not come as a surprise to him.



Ryan Nichols plays guitar and sings
Roger Fowler plays drums
Rick Espinoza plays bass

CAT



Interview by Jenny Angelillo and Hope
Photos by Jenny Angelillo and Donofthedeat
Layout by Matt Average

I saw Cat Party play for the first time on September 18, 2009 at Annie's Social Club in San Francisco (when you're in a band and also a major homebody like I am, you often connect the dots of your social life through old flyers). Cat Party was wedged in the middle of a bill that included an obnoxious female-fronted punk band and a "punker than thou" San Francisco d-beat band. Cat Party was unexpected. They were doing something new at that time in a primarily hardcore-dominated scene in San Francisco: a powerful mixture of passion, darkness, honesty, and grit that was a cross between punk and goth. Their sound existed in an undefined space, touching on elements of post-punk and new wave, while blasting away classifications.

They grabbed me because singer and guitarist Ryan was fucking committed to his cause. Captivating and seductive, he forced a room of crusties and hardcore kids to put down their drinks, stop their conversations, and walk their studded and ass-flapped asses over to the stage. Drummer Roger commanded the most minimal kit I've ever seen a drummer play. Yet, ironically, it had the biggest sound, like it was coming from some sort of Alex Van Halen wet-dream, colossal, stadium-blasting set up.

They didn't wear "outfits." They weren't posing. No eyeliner. No studs. No smoke machines, laser light shows, coffins, bats, etc. Without the need for any

PARTY

Halloween hipster shenanigans, these boys from the beach banged out some achingly beautiful, dark shit.

Offstage, the members of Cat Party are down-to-earth Southern California skater dudes, much like the guys I grew up crushing on at the skatepark as a fifteen-year-old skate betty. Cat Party—always the sweet and tender hooligans—will buy you a beer and a shot to get the party started. They're always cracking jokes and having fun, sometimes with tongue firmly planted in cheek and they have no reservations about taking silly (and slightly sexual) photos involving ice cream cones, novelty Christmas sweaters, or machetes.

Ryan Nichols, Roger Fowler, and Rick Espinoza spoke with me and Rick's girlfriend Hope (who helped me with the interview) about growing up in Orange County and hating beach culture, Deadbolt (the greatest band ever), and what happens when your footwear sends conflicting messages about your mood.

Jenny: First things first, I did a little internet research just on “cat party” as a phrase and when you Google “cat party.” the very first thing that comes up is some girl’s fashion blog. Did you guys know about this?

Ryan: Oh I’ve heard about this. “I love Cat Party”?

Jenny: Yes. Have you guys ever confronted these girls? Have you ever had association with them?

Ryan: No, I’m just happy that somebody loves Cat Party.

Roger: The only time I ever confronted anybody about the name was on Myspace. Big Cat Rescue hit us up. And I didn’t know what it was. So I said, “Fuck you, we’re Cat Party, fuck you” or some shit. I don’t remember because I was drunk. You can probably archive that shit. And they came back saying, “We’re just here to help the cats. I don’t know what you thought when you read our site but we’re actually a charity...” And then I was like [uuuggghhhh]...It’s not really a funny story. But now I don’t say shit to anyone on the computer. There could be twenty shitty bands named Cat Party. It’s doesn’t really matter.

Ryan: We don’t need to chastise any cat rescue programs.

Jenny: Just for the journalistic purpose of this interview, I sent them a really hateful email. They haven’t responded yet.

Rick: That’s funny.

Jenny: I said “How dare you? Do you know what this really means? Have you heard of this band!?”

Roger: “Do you know what a Cat Party really is, bitch!?”

Jenny: Basically, yes. They probably think I’m crazy. But funny you should mention, Roger, I went on the good old Urban Dictionary website and put in “Cat Party.”

Roger: Cat Party is like a lesbian squirt party?

Jenny: Yes, that’s definition number two. So when you put “Cat Party” into the Urban Dictionary, number two definition is lesbian sleeper...

Ryan: There’s nothing wrong with that.

Roger: No wonder people get mixed messages from us. They don’t even know what to think. “Is that a girl band?”

Jenny: My favorite definition from the Urban Dictionary was, “an event occurring when you bring all the cats into the bedroom and place them on the bed. This can be performed one cat at a time or en masse. Upon completion of said task, the challenge is to say, hey it’s a...”

Everyone: Cat Party!

Jenny: You got it! So who came up with this name?

Roger: I suggested it. But me and Ryan were sitting on...

Jenny: The bed?

Ryan: Yeah we were sitting on the love seat [pauses] naked. We were sitting in the jacuzzi... naked...

Roger: We were sitting on my lap... no we were sitting on my computer looking at pictures. I had pictures of my birthday party and my

cat, both in the same file. It was titled “Cat-slash-Party.” And I was like “Can we call the band Cat Party?” And we both giggled. We were like, “Hee hee hee.”

Ryan: We were trying to come up with *dramatic* stuff. And it was too dramatic.

Roger: Cat Party just stuck. The more we said it—and people were like “yuck”—but it doesn’t match the music, so I like it.

Ryan: It’s a fun name. The two words are fun.

Roger: It makes me think of cute shit. It makes me think of cats, and I like cats so it’s not just a coincidence. It makes me think of cuddling cats. It’s a funny, cute name. Like Cookie Duster. There’s a band called Cookie Duster. It’s cute. “Cat Party.” You can’t not laugh when you say it. We almost couldn’t say it for the first two months without going “hee hee hee.” [Roger giggles like the cookie monster.]

Jenny: In the beginning, Cat Party was just a two piece?

Ryan and Roger: No.

Ryan: We started out as a three piece. And then Roger and I as a two-piece along side of that for a while. What happened was our old bass player thought we were playing shows without him so he quit, not knowing that it was just a completely different side project. We were practicing almost every day. He couldn’t always practice so we started writing other songs, heavier stuff, so it became another band. He heard we were playing shows and thought we were doing it behind his back, but really he just couldn’t practice enough. We had just started another band so we could play more often. He quit, we did that project, and then we got another bass player and started over again. But we didn’t carry over any of the other songs. We just started over again—the same style, but with new songs.

Roger: We recorded a little demo. I have it somewhere. That shit was gnarly! [Roger sings a bit “De naaa naaa naaaaaah”] It was some heavy shit.

Jenny: I heard a rumor that in that band you guys covered The Outfield “Your Love”?

Roger: Yeah! Hell yeah!

Jenny: What else did you cover?

Roger: We did The Outfield, Gregg Kihn Band...

Ryan: “The Breakup Song.”

Roger: We did Tom Petty.

Rick: “Break Down.”

Roger: We did “Break Down.” Kind of as Cat Party, but originally as the two-piece. But we re-wrote that song fucking better than Tom Petty. I don’t have a good recording of it...

Ryan: It’s true.

Roger: We made that shit dope. And as a two-piece, there was a tambourine and shit....

Ryan: We did that. We did a whole Wipers set. We did all Wipers once, because that’s not obvious [laughs].

Roger: Q Lazzarus, Stone Roses, Dead Kennedys....

Rick: Rudimentary Peni.

Ryan: Oh yeah we did “Teenage Time Killer.”

Roger: We would just learn covers because me and him (Ryan) are just really good at learning things by ear.

Ryan: A couple Lemonheads songs...

Roger: [sings “ship without a rudder / ship without a rudder”] I fucking love that song!

Ryan: “Rudderless!”

Jenny: [to Ryan and Roger] How did you two meet?

Roger: Skatepark, man. Oh no. Jamming. Jamming, naturally with some dipshit dude we knew. Ryan showed up one day and we were all jamming, trying to start a band, and this other dude was playing weird Kinks-

Roger: We’ve been told that we sound like a cloudy day at the beach.



**We're not perfect and
the flashy striped sock**



sounding crap and Stones stuff. Ryan was playing all echo-y post punk stuff. And Ryan and I would just play and have fun.

Ryan: It was this hippy kid. And this hippy kid got mad that Roger and I would be playing and having fun. And Roger and I hit it off. We'd seen each other at the skatepark.

Roger: I ended up being in another band with that guy for four months...

Ryan: Um, try *four years maybe!*

Roger: No, we had a band for a while. I remember I kicked him the fuck out because he was a douchebag. And two days later I was skating at Ladera Ranch. Ryan passed by me and I asked him if he was still playing guitar.

Ryan: Really? When that park just opened? See, I don't remember this.

Roger: Yeah. When that park had just opened and it was all free and rad. And then we met up a couple weeks later at San Clemente park and I asked him if he ever listened to Death From Above.

Ryan: We just kept seeing each other at skateparks and it went from there...

Hope: How old were you guys?

Ryan: I was fourteen and you were, what, forty?

Roger: [laughs] I was thirty.

Ryan: I was twenty-four and you were like thirty.

Roger: I must have been thirty because we played my thirty-first birthday.

Ryan: But we used to tell everyone that you were twenty-one.

Roger: We used to say that Ryan and I were the same age. Because I looked like it. But Ryan was a little whippersnapper. He was chubby, too.

Ryan: I was drinking a lot more back then. And eating not so great food.

Roger: Me and Ryan would get double cheeseburgers after practice. And lots of Taco Bell. Every fucking night. So much Taco Bell. We'd go get drunk at Ole's and we'd eat the pizza there and I'd throw pizza at everyone.

Ryan: *You would eat pizza.*

Roger: I'd eat the fuck out of pizza.

Ryan: And I'd eat those little garlic knots.

Roger: I would eat pizza and throw pizza at everyone and get kicked out. Man, we were belligerent as shit back then.

Ryan: That was in my "fat days." Yeah...

Roger: And we'd practice from six till ten. Then we'd go to the bar and I'd get home at two in the morning.

Ryan: We'd practice during the week a lot.

Roger: It was like every day was Friday.

Ryan: But I remember I got a message from you, on a house phone, and it said "Fuck that

hippy kid, let's go skate." Literally, that's what you said. Then the next day we went skating at the etnies park (in Lake Forest) and you showed me some music. We played that night for a couple of hours and recorded on a four track.

Roger: I think "Jigsaw Thoughts" was one of them?

Ryan: And we would throw the microphone over this PVC pipe in the garage.

Roger: We hung the microphone over this pipe. It would droop down and Ryan would have to sing like this [imitates Lemmy]. And then it melted and got all weird... nothing was in there but we put up Christmas lights. We filmed a video in that garage. That was a really great deal, having that garage. It was halfway underground...

Ryan: And your neighbors were cool. Marty and Tracy. How fucked is that I remember their names?

Roger: The day that Ryan joined the band is the day I got my cat back after it had been missing for three weeks!

Jenny: So it comes full circle! Cat Party seems like it was born out of mutual love of cats, partying, music, and skateboarding. Is that the essence?

Ryan: That's the essence.

Roger: Even if Ryan and I didn't skate, we'd still be playing the same kind of music.

Ryan: I ran into this kid at the skatepark today who saw my Cat Party tattoo and didn't know I was in the band. I was like, "You think I just have this tattoo because I'm a fan? Yeah I don't think so." But after I told him I was in the band, he even said to me, "Oh, it makes sense that you guys skate." He also knows Roger and put two and two together and said, "Yeah, if you guys didn't skate or surf, Cat Party wouldn't make sense."

Jenny: Why do you think he said that?

Roger: Because he knows us from being around skating. It's total California shit.

Ryan: Yeah, total California shit. But I really think that we sound like where we're from.

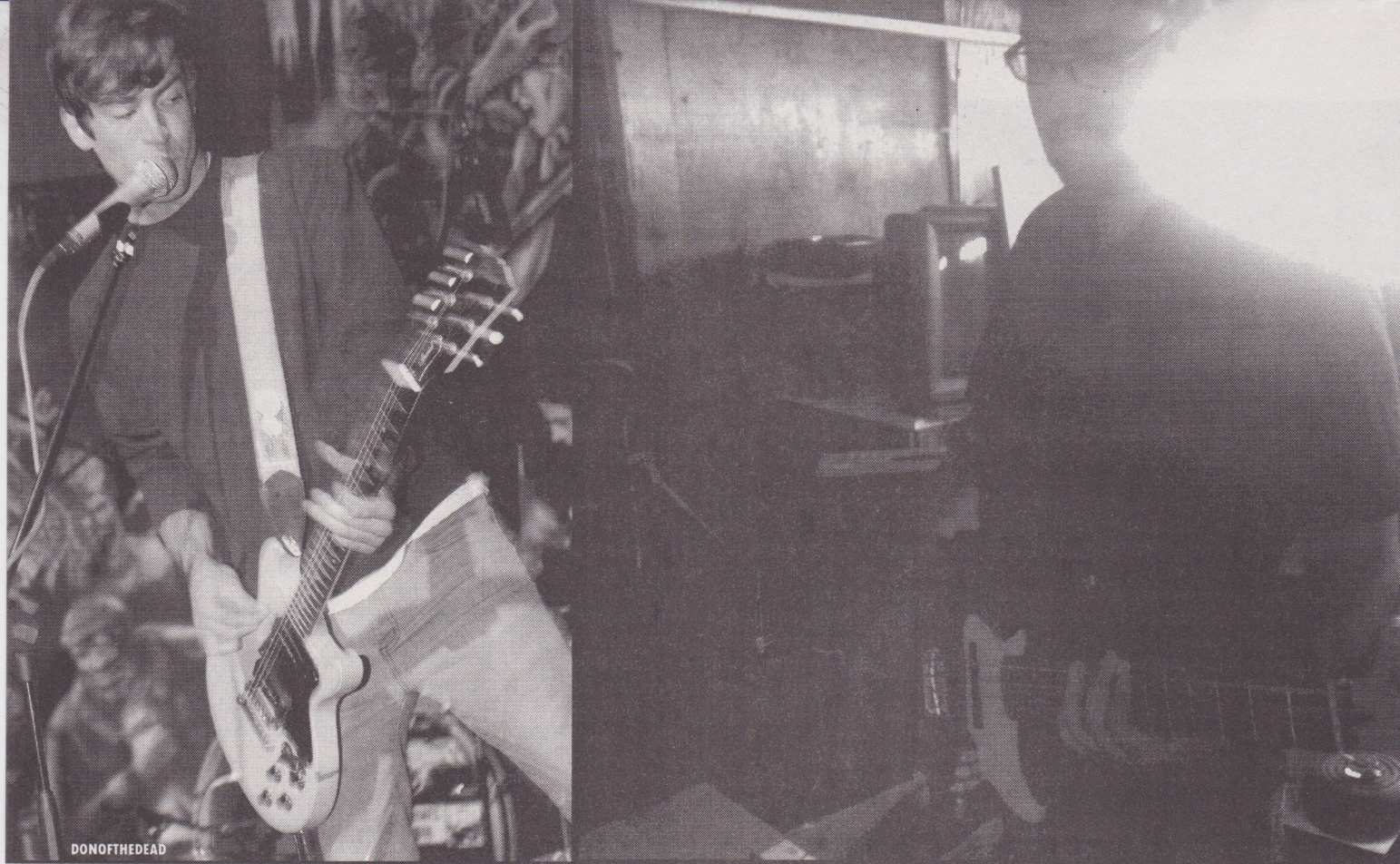
Roger: We've been told that we sound like a cloudy day at the beach. That we have a beachy sound... we're from this area, but we're not totally surfers.

Ryan: What the fuck are you talking about? You surf!

Roger: Yeah, but we don't play in flip-flops and shorts.

Jenny: Speaking of discussing Cat Party's sound, the first time I saw you guys play, I came up to Ryan afterwards and asked him if he liked The Chameleons. Do you guys have those bands that you wish people would stop comparing you to? Are you sick of hearing things like Wipers or Joy Division?

we don't have any of s and all that shit.



Roger: No, I don't get mad because those are great bands. If we can do it, just the three of us, and other bands are trying to do it with three guitar players.

Ryan: I'm tired of it, but I'm glad they say those bands and not whack bands. "Oh you guys sound like Big Head Todd And The Monsters" [laughter].

Roger: Fuck yeah!

Roger: I hate it when we got called "pop punk."

Ryan: Who said that? I'll kill them.

Jenny: To discuss where you're from, Orange County, and its effect on your sound, you could start out by saying that there's discourse that stems in two major directions. On one hand, you get those "beach culture" punk bands, like The Gears and The Crowd and Middle Class, Channel 3, and the whole *Beach Blvd.* compilation thing, The Simpletones, you know "I have a date, everything is great, the weather is great, let's go surf," but then on the flipside, you get those darker Orange County bands—TSOL, early Social Distortion, 45 Grave, D.I.—where the attitude is, "Yeah, we're from the beach but we hate it. We think it fucking sucks."

Rick: "OC life is not for me."

Jenny: Exactly.

Roger: Yeah, we were like, "The beach sucks, San Clemente kinda fucking sucks." It came through in our music. We don't sing about surfing or doing anything like that shit.

Ryan: It's surf-y. I like surf music. But I like TSOL because they were the different ones of the bunch. They didn't sound like they were from here, even though they were.

Roger: I put TSOL with bands like the Middle Class. I put them separate. Plus they had different incarnations of themselves, which was cool. Some people didn't like it, but I did, so fuck it.

Hope: Where do you guys fit in? What bands do you like to play with?

Roger: We hear weird bands that people have never heard of, bands that are weirder than we are....

Ryan: Bands from out of state. Bands from Phoenix and Tempe, Reno, Portland, San Francisco, Seattle...

Hope: Because I saw you guys at a punk show and every punk around was like, "Hey who's that band?" I'd say "Cat Party," and they'd say "Oh....I like them"...

Roger: That's because we came from that scene. The punk scene. Rick and I both. A lot of punkers like that play post punk. They love post punk. And we fit in that. You'd be surprised.

Rick: Especially bands from Portland and up north.

Roger: We fit into the more DIY scene. We're not perfect and we don't have any of the flashy striped socks and all that shit. We can play with the indie kids... but we'd play with the indie kids and be "too much."

Ryan: Our problem—and kind of along the lines of what you're saying—is that

we're not punk enough for the punk crowd and we're too punk for the indie crowd and there's no in-between. And there's not enough people doing what we do around here, in Southern California. And what we're doing has been popular and will be again, but right now it's not.

Roger: There's a trend of shitty surf garage shit. And stuff like that, but those are all drunk kids playing shitty on purpose.

Ryan: I play shitty but I'm actually trying to play *good* [laughter]... we are really trying to be good musicians!

Roger: I'm just making music. I don't really care about "being a performer." We've played the "punk set." We've manipulated our set for shits and giggles because we're mad at the crowd and we'll play really shitty. Ryan had a few meltdowns in the early days. It was really funny.

Ryan: A lot of people had meltdowns in the early days.

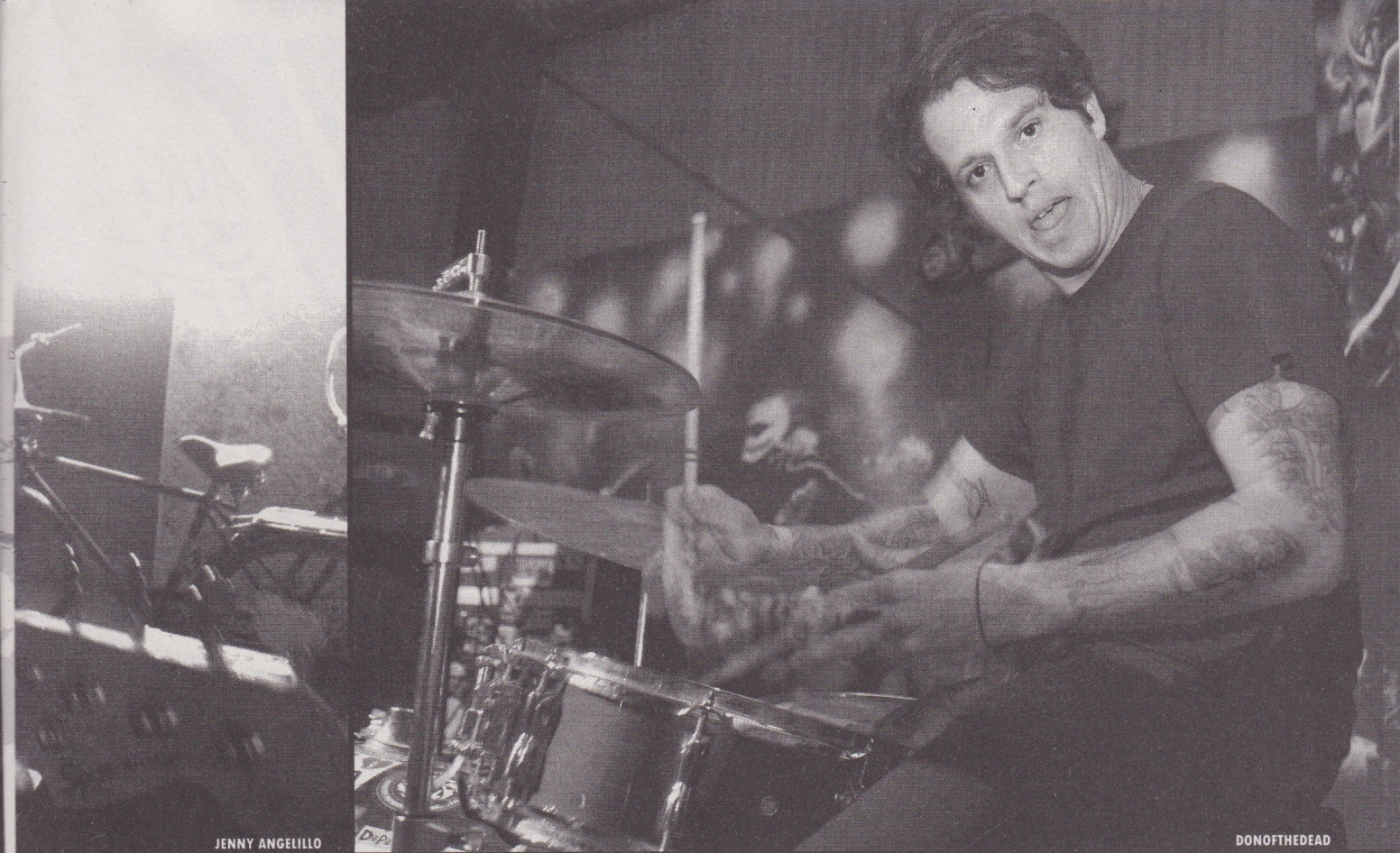
Roger: [laughs] The Doll Hut. You took the microphone and bent it down...

Jenny: Well, The Doll Hut will make anyone have a meltdown, me included.

Roger: Ryan was wearing these white shoes. And in the pictures your feet looked huge. [Ryan laughs.] They were Converse. You got them that day at the swap meet or Goodwill, and you were like, "These are fucking *rad*!"

Ryan: I loved those shoes, man! They were One Stars. [laughter]

Roger: I have pictures of you from that show.



JENNY ANGELILLO

DONOTHEDEAD

You were wearing that brown sweater.

Ryan: You told me that, "My feet looked like The Strokes and your face looks like Sisters of Mercy." [laughter]

Roger: But we met the Ex-Paladins that night. They were awesome. If I'm gonna mention one band in this interview...

Rick: What happened to them?

Ryan: That guy farted into oblivion. That whole set he just kept talking about what his farts smelled like.

Jenny: Where are they now?

Ryan: I don't know. He was texting me up until a couple of years ago.

Jenny: Maybe they're playing the same circuits with Deadbolt? You wanna talk about Deadbolt?

Rick: [imitates generic surf guitar] Dah dah dah deh deh deh dah dah de deah.....

Ryan: Remember, we asked them to play my birthday and they wanted twelve hundred dollars? And I was like, "Yikes. Later!"

Jenny: Maybe if we're talking about them in the interview, they'll knock it down to five hundred.

Ryan: I could swing two-fifty.

Jenny: Yeah, I'd chip in for two-fifty.

Ryan: They just put out a record this week

Rick: How's it sound? [Everyone proceeds to sing Deadbolt songs.]

Ryan: I don't know. Clowns, alcohol, cigarettes.... [laughter]

Jenny: So how did you guys meet Rick?

Rick: So Roger and I were playing in a crust band ten years ago.

Ryan: Did you guys ever open up for Def Leppard? Go.

Rick: No, but we played with Battalion Of Saints and a bunch of Nazis showed up.

Roger: Oh yeah. Fitzgerald's in Huntington Beach.

Jenny: Oh god, is that place still around? The only bar I've ever fallen asleep in. Not because I was drunk. I was just bored.

Rick: We were called Demit. Yeah we played with Battalion Of Saints and I was one of five minorities there. It was white power-ville.

Roger: And Rick is the biggest dude in there.

Rick: I'm a target.

Roger: We were sitting in the car, trying to figure out if we wanted to actually play.

Rick: I'm playing the guitar, and as I'm playing I'm just flipping everyone off. And I'm thinking "I'm so gonna get beat up for this," and then we're done, I go into the bathroom, and these skinheads were the most cordial motherfuckers. They're like "Excuse me" [in a very cordial and professional voice]. It was all show and they didn't do anything.

Roger: Huntington Beach, man.

Rick: "Cordial Skins."

Roger: We played for about a year then Rick went off to school to be a scientist.

Rick: We lost touch for a couple of years then I ran into Roger at a boat show in Long Beach.

Roger: The Rocket Boat! I was on the boat and I saw Rick standing on the dock, because

he's the only six-foot-four Mexican. And then we started jamming...

Rick: You guys were actually playing with some band called Retard Strength.

Ryan: I don't even remember playing with them, but their name is great!

Rick: I then joined them in 2010. Roger and I jammed in another band and then I joined them.

Roger: Then he went to Europe and joined us again.

Jenny: So I wanted to tell you guys about this special invention I have called "The Birthday Basement." And in the Birthday Basement it's your birthday—duh—and anything is possible and it's going to be the best party ever. It's a time machine, it's a telephone booth in the style of Bill and Ted's, but in the Birthday Basement you can have three bands play, and it can be any band past or present.

Ryan: Deadbolt. Triple set. [laughter].

Jenny: So Roger, who's playing your birthday?

Ryan: Motörhead three times?

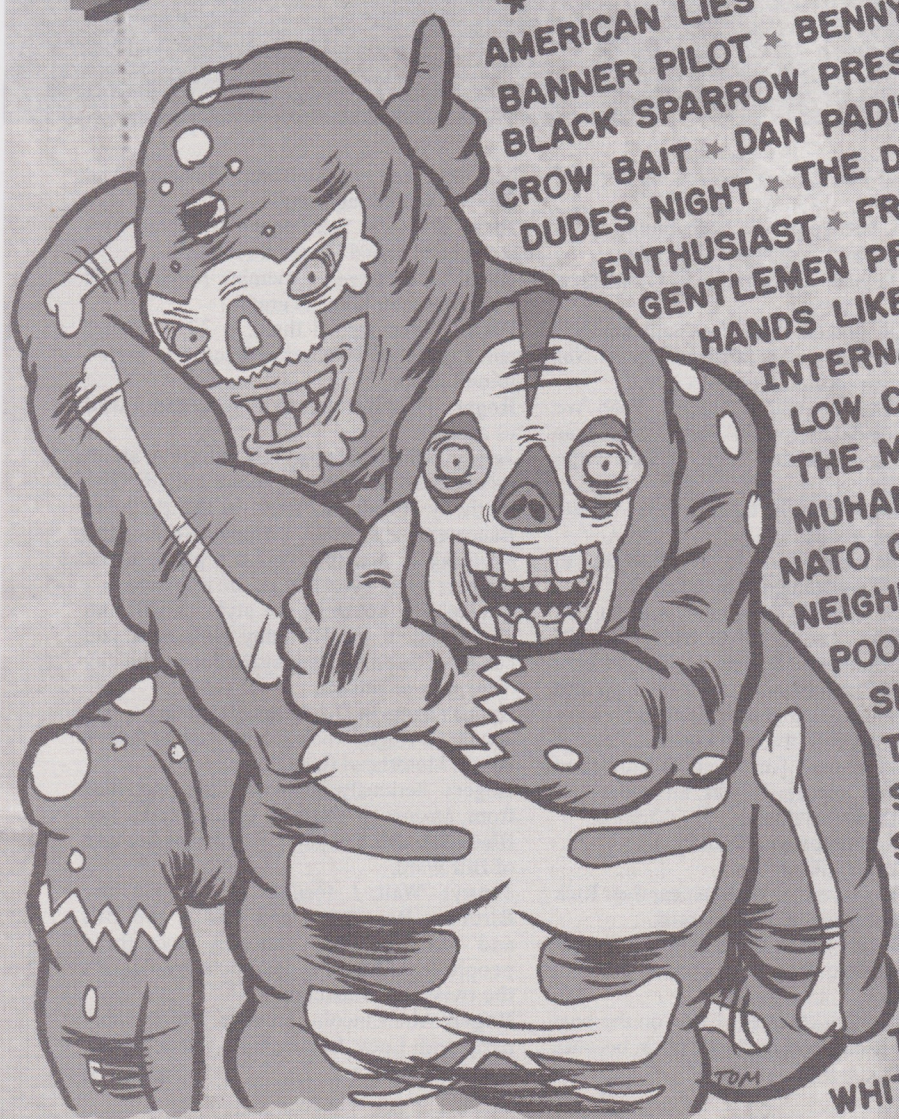
Roger: Seriously, I would say Metallica from *Master of Puppets* era, Eazy-E, and Black Sabbath. Fuck it. I play drums because of Bill Ward.

Jenny: Wait I forgot, so also in the Birthday Basement, and this is the Bill and Ted's portion, you can have three people from history, dead or alive. Here's the twist. No musicians.

Roger: Abe Lincoln, for sure. I'd probably party with Lucy. Lucille Ball. She's badass.

★ AWESOME FEST★ FISIETE ★

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2013
SAN DIEGO
CALIFORNIA



★ AMERICAN LIES ★ BAD COP / BAD COP ★ THE BAM BAM
BANNER PILOT ★ BENNY THE JET RODRIGUEZ ★ BIG DICK
BLACK SPARROW PRESS ★ BUMKLAATT ★ THE CREEPS
CROW BAIT ★ DAN PADILLA ★ THE DISTRESSERS
DUDES NIGHT ★ THE DUDIKOFFS ★ THE DOPAMINES
ENTHUSIAST ★ FRENCH EXIT ★ GATEWAY DISTRICT
GENTLEMEN PREFER BLOOD ★ HORROR SQUAD
HANDS LIKE BRICKS ★ LIPSTICK HOMICIDE
INTERNATIONAL DIPSHIT ★ JABBER
LOW CULTURE ★ THE MANIX
THE MAXIES ★ MORAL CRUX ★ RADON
MUHAMMADLI ★ MURMURS ★ PARASITES
NATO COLES & T.B.D.B. ★ NEEDLES//PINS
NEIGHBORHOOD BRATS ★ RUMSPRINGER
POOL PARTY (WUT?) ★ SHARK PANTS
SHELLSHAG ★ SIREN SONGS
THE SLOW DEATH ★ SPOKENEST
SONIC AVENUES ★ THE STEINWAYS
SUMMER VACATION ★ SUNNYSIDE
TERRY MALTS ★ TIGHT BROS
THE TURKLETONS ★ TILTWHEEL
TOYS THAT KILL ★ URTC
TURKISH TECHNO ★ THE VISITORS
WHITE NIGHT ★ WORTHWHILE WAY
WRECK OF THE ZEPHYR
+ MORE

I'm thinking "I'm so gonna get beat up for this," and then we're done, I go into the bathroom, and these skin-heads were the most cordial motherfuckers



JENNY ANGELILLO

And I'd invite mostly chicks so I'd invite Carol Burnett. I used to watch her with my grandma. They probably wouldn't get the music, but I'd make them act out skits for me. Like the *Gone with the Wind* when she comes down in the curtain rod! I'd make her do it again and again.

Rick: I would pick Nirvana, one of my favorite bands, 2 Live Crew [everyone sings "Heeeeey I want some pussssssaaaay"] sounds cheesy, but I'd totally watch Joy Division... so I was gonna pick Mozart....

Jenny: I'll give you Mozart. He just has to watch.

Rick: Yeah, I'd like his reaction to Joy Division....

Hope: Don't get him near a piano.

Rick: I'm also gonna go with Einstein and Joan of Arc.

Ryan: I was gonna say Nirvana, but I'm gonna go to Rick's party, so I'm gonna say Guns And Roses, Wiper—and I know we've been harping on the Wipers, but to see them in their heyday—and, wait I'm going to go to Roger's party and see Black Sabbath, so I'm gonna say Madonna. When her first record came out and she wore sexy lacy gloves.

Jenny: Yes! Early '80s hairy armpit Madonna.

Ryan: Yeah, Madonna with black hair. In *Playboy*... okay, my three people... members of Deadbolt! [laughter]

Ryan: Anthony Bourdain, Steve Jobs, because I'd do some networking, get a fucking sick job, and Mark Gonzales.

Jenny: So you guys have a record that just came out—*A Thousand Shades of Grey*.

Ryan: Yeah. We recorded it a year ago. It's been in my garage for a year.

Roger: We were all going through stuff. Ryan's been in school. I had a baby. We had to get Rick back.

Jenny: So I'm going to throw Cat Party the band in the Birthday Basement. You guys are putting out a full length. Who's producing it?

Roger: I'd like to see what Rick Rubin would do with Cat Party.

Rick: Yeah, I was just thinking that!

Ryan: I'm going to say Josh Homme

(Queens Of The Stone Age). Because that would be fun. It seems that anyone can go to Steve Albini these days. And yeah, Rick Rubin would be cool.

Rick: I'm going to say Scott Lit.

Ryan: Who's that? The guy from Stone Temple Pilots?

Rick: No, he worked a lot with REM.

Ryan: Ooh, so he has a lot of Rickenbackers on the wall.

Rick: He worked with Nirvana and a bunch of other shit.

Ryan: Does he live in Fullerton? (Confused, as if he thinks he knows him personally.)

Rick: No, he lives in Malibu. He drops his kids off at the Boys and Girls Club that my sister's ex works at.

Hope: Okay, it's your day off. What album are you putting on?

Ryan: Antonio Carlos Jobim, any album.

Roger: Whatever band I'm in at the time that I have a show coming up!

Rick: Crass.

Hope: You're hungover. What album are you putting on?

Roger: Van Morrison

Hope: Rick?

Ryan: Crass. The easy listening album.

Rick: The Horrors

Ryan: Antonio Carlos Jobim again.

Jenny: When I want to ignore people in my band on tour, I listen to Van Morrison. Does everyone in Cat Party own cats?

Roger: Rick is actually deathly allergic to cats. His face swells up. But he has two blind Chihuahuas. They're kind of like cats... I have three cats. And that was my old cat [points to Ryan's cat, Kirry].

Jenny: How many names has Kirry had?

Roger: [starts to list] Kitty Meow...

Ryan: Five. Scribble Kitty, Eileen, Susie, Crow—because I thought it was a cool name and it was too late for me to start using it. Barf-tholomew. Because the first time Rick came over she barfed all over the place....

Jenny: Roger, how do your cats react to your new baby? I'm always curious to know how animals react to their owner's having new babies. Because they're there first...

Roger: They try to sleep on him.

Ryan: Nietzsche and Leo (Roger's cats) try to sleep on Wyatt (the baby)?

Roger: They try and crawl on his lap.

Ryan: Babies have laps?

Roger: He's new, so they just wanna lay near him. As soon the baby starts crying, Nietzsche leaves the room. He hates it.

Jenny: You guys like ice cream? I heard a rumor. And I've seen numerous slightly sexual ice cream-eating photos on your band's Facebook page.

Roger: Cuppy Cones!

Jenny: Okay, Cat Party goes through the drive thru at McDonald's. What does everyone get?

Roger: Two double cheeseburgers and a large fry. Ryan gets a Cuppy Cone.

Ryan: What the fuck is a Cuppy Cone?

Roger: It's an ice cream cone that he dips in his coffee.

Ryan: And I know how to flavor your coffee [to Roger], you put sixteen sugars and fourteen creamers. Cream and sugar doesn't begin to describe how Roger drinks his coffee. You put the goddamn Willy Wonka chocolate factory in there.

Jenny: Last question. Favorite video from Beavis and Butthead?

Rick: Oooh, Cypress Hill

Ryan: White Zombie.

Roger: I never got into it. What the fuck is wrong with me?

Ryan: And you smoke a lot of pot, too!

Roger: I didn't smoke any pot back then, so that explains it.

catpartymusic.bandcamp.com

facebook.com/catpartymusic

TOP FIVES

RAZORCAKE

Adam Bowers

- Knapsack playing The Fest
- Southpaw, "Hub"
- Handski, *Terminal Dreamland*
- *Only the Young*, documentary about skateboarders in Santa Clarita
- *The Wire*

Art Ettinger

- Murder Junkies, *A Killing Tradition LP*
- Hellstomper, *The Complete Final Sessions 7"*
- Mean Jeans / Underground Railroad To Candyland, *Split 7"*
- The Connection, *Crawling from the Wreckage (of a Saturday Night) 7"*
- Japanther, *Eat Like Lisa Act Like Bart LP*

Bill Pinkel

- Steve Adamyk Band, *Third LP*
- Big Eyes, *Almost Famous LP*
- Testors, *Live 1976-1979 LP*
- Future Virgins / Toys That Kill, *Split 7"*
- Steve Adamyk Band and Needles/Pins live at the Redwood (Ow, my freakin' ears!)

Chad Williams

1. Flag live at Punk Rock Bowling. Finally, redemption for the 2003 Palladium debacle.
2. Night Birds, *Maimed for the Masses 7"*
3. Proxy, *Something We've All Seen Before 12"*
4. Icon Gallery, *Valiance/The Pact 7"*
5. T.S.O.L., *You Don't Have to Die 7"*

Chris Mason

Top 5 Sets I Caught at Chaos In Tejas

1. Marked Men at Red 7
2. No Statik at Cheer Up Charlies
3. The Novice at Beerland
4. Vaginars at Mohawk
5. Destruction Unit at Red 7

Chris Terry

1. Late Bloomer LP
2. Chance The Rapper, *Acid Rap* mixtape
3. Iceage, *You're Nothing LP*
4. Alpoko Don, *The Ol' Soul EP* mixtape
5. My story "Graffiti" in the August issue of *PANK* (pankmagazine.com)

Craig Horky

1. Rocket From The Crypt is playing live shows again.
2. Rocket From The Crypt is playing live shows again.
3. Rocket From The Crypt is playing live shows again.
4. Rocket From The Crypt is playing live shows again.
5. Rocket From The Crypt is playing live shows again.

Daryl Gussin

- Handski, *Terminal Dreamland*
- Joyride!, Self-titled LP
- Gateway District, *Old Wild Hearts LP*
- Crusades, *Parables 7"* tie with Steve Adamyk Band, *Third LP*
- Repos, "Armed and Using" b/w "Hole in the Hill" 7"

Designated Dale

Top Five People That Have Passed on Over the Years from the Month of June

1. Richard H. Drazan
2. Hector M. Gomez
3. Douglas G. Colvin
4. Arturo Vega
5. Matthew Odietus

Dave Williams

Top 5 of the First Half of 2013

1. Nato Coles & The Blue Diamond Band, *Promises to Deliver LP*
2. Integrity, *Suicide Black Snake LP*
3. Jex Thoth, *Blood Moon Rise LP*
4. Hessian, *Manegarmr LP*
5. Alkaline Trio, *My Shame Is True LP*

Evan Wolff

Top 5 New Jams

1. Dead Dog, *Precious Child LP*
2. Nervosas, Self-titled LP
3. Natos Coles & The Blue Diamond Band, *Promises to Deliver LP*
4. Full Sun, "Stay Awake" b/w "The Ghost" and "Dark Side" 7"
5. Huff Stuff Magazine, *Sugar Mountain LP*

Ever Velasquez

1. Chance The Rapper, *Acid Rap*
2. Action Bronson, *Saaab Stories*
3. Bones Brigade: *An Autobiography*
4. Big Crux, *Nature Cruising EP*
5. Dodgers vs. D-Backs, 06/11/13

Gabe Rock

Top 5 Songs I Would Put on a Mixtape for You to Make You Smile, Boogie, and Get Funky

1. Sebadoh, "Freed Pig"
 2. They Might Be Giants, "Birdhouse in Your Soul"
 3. The Records, "Starry Eyes"
 4. Wire, "Dot Dash"
 5. Slade, "Everyday"
- Secret song: A\$AP Rocky, "F**kin Problems"

George Rager

Top 5 Bands I'm Stoked on (New or Old) Right Now

1. Infernöh, brutal Swedish HC featuring members of Skitkids, Fy Fan, etc. Think a faster, more pissed Totalitär.
2. Stoic Violence, easily the best HC punk to come out of L.A. in the last decade (or more).

3. Les Calamites, '80s French pop/rock in the vein of the Bangles/early Go-Go's.
4. Cülo, HC punk from Chicago. Brutal and tearing.
5. Negative Degree, rad HC from Colorado. Gives me hope for playing in a cool band, should I ever move back there.

Jennifer Federico

Top 5 Covers That I Love

- Mudhoney doing The Dicks' "Hate the Police"
- Reigning Sound doing Harold Arlen's and Ted Koehler's "Stormy Weather"
- Minor Threat doing Wire's "12XU"
- Alaric doing Christian Death's "Dogs"
- The Damned doing Love's "Alone Again Or"

Jimmy Alvarado

Five Random Tunes That Just Popped Up on My iPod that Oddly Enough Fit Well Together (in order of appearance)

- A Frames, "Bumble Bee" (Babyhead Comp.)
- Alterboys, "Roy Orbit's Son" (Club Foot Comp.)
- Old Time Relijun, "Book of Life and Crime" (Witchcraft Rebellion)
- Cutthroats 9, "You Should Be Dead" (You Should Be Dead single)
- Abecedarians, "Ghosts" (Eureka)

Joe Dana

1. Punk Rock Bowling actually being fun again.
2. RVIVR and French Exit at VLHS. Seeing RVIVR live makes everything good again.
3. Underwater City People, Get Set Go, and Arbuckle at Los Globos.
4. The Blackhands, the Heart Racers, and Caldwell Jack at the Kibitz Room.
5. The Return of Razorcake's I Heart Drinking Beer and Listening to Records DJ party at Bar 107.

35 Amazing inches

Juan Espinosa
 • The Repos, *Poison Head* Cassette
 • Needles, Sudor, Kurraka live at 1234 Go! Records in Oakland, CA
 • La Luz, *Damp Face* Cassette
 • Belgrado, "Panopticon" b/w "Vicious Circle" 7"
 • Night Birds, *Maimed for the Masses* 7"

Kevin Dunn
Five Cool But Very Different Punk Bands from Bandung, Indonesia I Found Out About on a Recent Trip There:
 • Under 18 (oi / street punk)
 • Alone At Last (pop punk)
 • Auman (mystic metal thrash)
 • Nudist Island (Fat Wreckonesia)
 • Forgotten Generation (Celtic punk!)

Lucky Nakazawa
Where Does Skin for Ink-Stenzors Living Skin Extensions Come From?
 5. Fresh knee and palm skin from skate accidents.
 4. Wrinkles that have been removed from face lifts.
 3. Circumcisions / Brit milah.
 2. From your own buttock.
 1. Surgically removed excess massive skin folds from 1-800-GET-THIN gastric bypass surgery.

Kurt Morris
 1. Mark Kozelek & Jimmy LaValle, *Perils from the Sea*
 2. The Appleseed Cast, *Illumination Ritual*
 3. Archers Of Loaf, *Icky Mettle*
 4. Guided By Voices, *Bee Thousand*
 5. Coliseum, *Sister Faith*

Mark Twistworthy
 • Oblivians, *Desperation* LP
 • Rumspringer, *Stay Afloat* LP
 • Toys That Kill / Future Virgins, *Split* 7"
 • Crusades, *Parables* 7"
 • The OBN III's, *Live at WFMU* LP

Marty Ploy
 • Rumspringer, *Stay Afloat*
 • Rational Anthem, *Whatevrmind*
 • The Ex-Boyfriends, *Disease*
 • Tight Bros, Self-titled
 • VLHS 2nd Anniversary Party with Shark Pants, F.Y.P., Horror Squad, The Atom Age, and Spokenest.

Matt Average
 • Juggling Jugulars, *Asylum* EP
 • Trauma, *10 Song* EP
 • Spectres, *Nothing to Nowhere* LP
 • Cat Party, *A Thousands Shades of Grey*
 • Mülltüte, Self-titled EP

Mike Dumps
 1. NONA, *Through the Head* LP
 2. Vacation, *Candy Waves* LP
 3. Technicolor Teeth, *Teenage Pagans* LP
 4. Potboiler, *Rolling Boil* LP
 5. No Sir, I Won't, *The Door* 12"

Mike Faloon
 1. Big Dipper, *Crashes the Platinum Planet* LP
 2. Mind Spiders / Lenguas Largas, *Sister Series IV* 2 x 7"
 3. Night Birds, *Maimed for the Masses* 7" EP
 4. Surf City, "It's a Common Life" download single
 5. Swearin', Self-titled LP

Mike Frame
 1. Airbourne, *Black Dog Barking*
 2. Whitey Morgan & The 78's, both albums and live
 3. Iron Reagan, *Worse Than Dead*
 4. Steve Earle, *The Low Highway*
 5. Tegan And Sara, *Heartthrob*

Nardwuar the Human Serviette
 1. Ugly Things Magazine 30th Anniversary Issue
 2. Mongrel Fanzine
 3. Enjoy the Experience book (Focusing on homemade / DIY / Private press records from 1958-1992)
 4. Riot 77 #16 (Incredible Irish punk zine!)
 5. Crazy & The Brains LP

Nighthawk
 • Rad Company / Tight Bros, *Split* 7"
 • AC/DC, *Back in Black* LP
 • Dwarves, *The Dwarves Are Born Again* LP
 • Little Richard
 • Real Talk with Nighthawk, online radio show <http://goo.gl/xLyHE>

Paul Comeau
Top 5 Reunions I Would Want to See More Than Flag or Black Flag, but Will Probably Never Happen
 1. The Proletariat
 2. What Feeds The Fire
 3. Scholastic Deth
 4. Shred The Past
 5. Fired Up!

Replay Dave
 • Radon, *We Bare All* CD
 • Big Eyes, *Almost Famous* LP
 • Mean Jeans / Underground Railroad To Candyland, *Split* 7"
 • Hard Skin, *Why Do Birds Suddenly Appear* LP
 • Off With Their Heads, *Home* LP

Rick Ecker
 • Girlschool, *The Bronze Years*
 • Warm Soda, *Someone for You*
 • Gag Order, *Refuse to Be Silent* EP
 • pacificUV, *After the Dream You Are Awake*
 • Raising Hope (TV show)

Naked Rob | Radio Valencia 87.9FM | San Francisco
 1. Gringos, *Pearly Gates* LP (Memphis metal rock)
 2. Neighborhood Brats, *No Sun No Tan* LP (L.A. / SFC punk rock)
 3. Jonny Manak And The Depressives, *Primitive Sound for a Modern World* LP (San Jose / Oakland garage punk)
 4. Oblivians, *Desperation* LP (Shake and bake boogie garage blues punk rock)
 5. Hickoids / The Grannies, *300 Years of Punk Rock* LP (TX cowpunk vs. SFC fuckpunk)

Ryan Horky
 1. That new Superchunk song.
 2. Napalm Death, 05/29/13 in Detroit
 3. Cülo, *My Life Sucks and I Could Care Less* LP
 4. CCR box set
 5. Ultraman, *Freezing Inside* LP

Sal Lucci
 1. Psychosurgeons, "Horizontal Action" b/w "Wild Weekend" 7"
 2. Ralph Nielson And The Chancellors, *Scream* 7"
 3. Oblivians, *Desperation* LP
 4. Toy Love LP
 5. Radio Ready: *Lost Power Pop Hits: 1978-1983*, Texas LP

Sean Arenas
 • Sneeze, *I'm Going to Kill Myself* LP
 • Calculator, *This Will Come to Pass* LP
 • Joyride, Self-titled LP
 • Mrs. Magician, *Strange Heaven* LP
 • Black Sparrow Press, *Fever Shakes* EP

Sean Koepenick
Best Singers of Black Sabbath
 1. Ronnie James Dio
 2. Ozzy Osbourne
 3. Glenn Hughes
 4. Ian Gillan
 5. Tony Martin

Steve Hart
 1. Puig Destroyer EP
 2. Dirtbags win MABL championship
 3. Daphne Oram, *Oramics*
 4. Coliseum, *Sister Faith*
 5. Steve Earle, *The Low Highway*

Tim Brooks
Chaos In Tejas
 • Marked Men
 • Novice
 • No Tolerance
 • Rival Mob
 • Stab

Toby Tober
Top 5 Movies I Have Enjoyed Recently
 1. Dirk Gently: Season 1 (unfortunately it's only one season)
 2. Shadows of Liberty
 3. The Hunt (Thomas Vinterberg's)
 4. Waiting for Lightning
 5. Happy People: A Year in the Taiga

Todd Taylor
 • Shellshag, *Forever* LP
 • Bill Bondsmen, "Dead" b/w "Peasant under Glass" 7" tied with Night Birds, *Maimed for the Masses* 7"
 • Frozen Teens, "Oakland" b/w "Footsteps" 7"
 • Crusades, *Parables* 7"
 • Low Culture, "Evil" b/w "Slave to You" 7" tied with Pity Party, *Do a Little Dance* 7"
 • Brokedowns / Vacation Bible School, *Split* 7"

Tommy Vandervort
 1. Neighborhood Brats, *No Sun No Tan* LP
 2. Dicks, *Kill from the Heart* (reissue) LP
 3. Canadian Rifle and Unfun at Ultra Lounge
 4. OWTB at Liars Club
 5. Die Time, Kraang, Autarch at the Mutiny, tie with celebrating my birthday with an afternoon of drinks and tunes courtesy of Razorcake, and celebrating that night at VLHS. Quite possibly my favorite birthday yet.

Ty Stranglehold
35 Amazing Inches
 1. Night Birds, *Maimed for the Masses* 7"
 2. The Novice, Self-titled 7"
 3. Neighborhood Brats, *Birth Right* 7"
 4. Toys That Kill / Future Virgins, *Split* 7"
 5. Low Culture, *Evil* 7"



100 FLOWERS: Self-titled: LP

Seminal punk minimalists The Urinals' sound matured slightly after their third seven inch. Around this time, the band changed their name to 100 Flowers. While The Urinals contribution to punk history has been solidified in recent years, the 100 Flowers era has languished in obscurity. This recent reissue of their only full-length is very welcome. The fifteen songs on this album are happy blasts of undistorted guitar and high energy drumming. The songs are slightly more involved than typical Urinals' fare, but maintain the intelligent lyrics and dry sound. The material has also been sort of hard to come by in recent years. The CD compilation *100 Years of Pulchritude* contains their entire output but has been out of print for a long time. I'm gonna do that record store thing and tell you that their harder to locate appearances on classic comps such as *Keats Rides a Harley* and *Hell Comes to Your House* contain punker offerings and are essential listening, so you should seek them out. But this album contains some essential California punk that should not be missed. If "Ride the Wild" is one of your favorite Descendents songs, then this album is for you. Now do the right thing and look up the word "pulchritude." If you're not careful, you might learn something. —Billups Allen (Superior Viaduct)

ACxDC / MAGNUM FORCE / SEX PRISONER: Split 10"

Wow, a one-sided three-way split of powerviolence on a 10". Interesting. First up is ACxDC who picked just about the most terrible name and I'll tell you why: a few years ago I was at Headline records here in L.A. flipping through the record racks when I overheard Jean-Luc talking to a kid about punk music. The girl told him she was into "AC/DC," much to Jean's surprise. He excitedly explained to her how AC/DC essentially aped Rose Tattoo, a band she had clearly not heard of prior. You can imagine the face she made when Jean played a Rose Tattoo CD for her as well as his subsequent head scratching: I'm all for silly and or clever band names but not when they confuse the shit out of people like this. Musically, however, they ain't too bad if you like pterodactyl screams and endless blast beats. Kids here locally seem to go apeshit for them but they've yet to convince me to buy any of their records or ball point pens. Magnum Force come through with more of a death/grindcore approach much like Insect Warfare and Hatred Surge; works for me. Sex Prisoner appropriately close out this split upping the ante on

RECORD REVIEWS



"Grow out of it, then work out to it fifteen years later."

—Chris Terry

PAINT IT BLACK: *Invisible: 7"*

just exactly why the words "power" and "violence" should be reserved only for a band of this caliber. They just completely fucking destroy! Crossed Out smoking sherm with Mellow Harsher in a Tucson alleyway. Check out the cool etching on the flip side as you're getting your ass handed to you. —Juan Espinosa (To Live A Lie)

ADICTS, THE: *All the Young Droogs*: CD

Brand new studio release from these veteran U.K. punkers. Having only recently discovered the awesomeness of the band's live show (I know, shame on me), I was pleasantly surprised to find out they can still produce in the studio. Fans of early Clash and Cock Sparrer will find lots to love here. But The Adicts absolutely have their own distinctive sound. Luckily "Give It to Me Baby" is not an Offspring cover. Monkey croons in one song—"stop the world I wanna get off." But I want to hang on for the ride. Viva! —Sean Koepenick (DC Jam,theadicts27@hotmail.com,dccjamrecords.com)

ADOLESCENTS, THE: *American Dogs in Europe*: CDEP

Probably this platter slipped under the radar for a lot of fans, considering it came out hot on the heels of *Fastest Kid Alive*. That's a crying shame since this is a solid mini disc. Soto and Reflex are

keeping the ship afloat here, but there are no leaks in sight. All the Agnews are gone, but the songwriting is still top notch. "Destination Nowhere" is the last song here. That's where you will be if you don't have this on your shelf. —Sean Koepenick (Concrete Jungle, contct@concretejungle.com,concretejunglerecords.com)

AGENT ORANGE: *Living in Darkness*: LP

Yeah, the downside to this whole vinyl "renaissance" is the ridiculous price tags. Yeah, I know, 180-gram vinyl, faithful reproduction, blahdeblah, but it doesn't change the fact that it both limits the ability of the average schlubs to pick up a copy of a record to which they *should* have total access, and acts as a prime example of the fetishizing of ephemera by monied hipsters and record collector schmucks who weren't around to collect it the first time around from subcultures they view as moribund and don't really care to understand. That said, it is also admittedly very fuggin' cool to see records like this on the format for which they were intended. Originally released on Posh Boy, *Living in Darkness* was Agent Orange's opening, and some would argue finest, punk salvo—four tracks per side of proto-hardcore up to its eyeballs in the sun and surf pop thuggery that, along with

other crucial releases by both peers and former members, became the template upon which the much-ballyhooed "SoCal Punk Sound" was built. From the siren-staccato guitar intro of "Too Young to Die" to the punked-up surf covers peppered here and there to the four-minute epic title track, this is the perfect soundtrack for folks who prefer their pop edgy and "like things that bite." Whether or not it's worth the twenty to twenty-five dollars I've seen it going for is a matter of personal choice, but it's most assuredly worth the repeated listens that'll inevitably occur. Limited to five hundred. —Jimmy Alvarado (Drastic Plastic)

ALTERED BOYS: Self-titled: 7" EP

Deranged is fast becoming another one o' them labels where you're not quite sure what yer gonna get, but it's usually good no matter what it ends up being. Wasn't quite able to gauge this one based on the Mansonesque cover, but what came howling along was some zippy, pissed-as-hell Canadian hardcore, burning fast, heavy, and is out the door before you know what hit ye. —Jimmy Alvarado (Deranged)

APPLESEED CAST, THE: *Illumination Ritual*: CD/LP

Over the more than fifteen year career of The Applesseed Cast, the lineup has turned over more than a few times, but singer and guitarist Christopher Crisci has remained. His voice and an atmospheric, indie rock guitar sound is what has made The Applesseed Cast's sound consistent in spite of the changes. *Illumination Ritual*, the band's eighth full-length album, is ten songs that come in at forty-four minutes. It's certainly different than their last full-length, *Sagarmatha*, and the one preceding it, *Peregrine*. In some ways, it is more reminiscent of the band's second LP, *Mare Vitalis*, especially as it relates to the drum work. The style of Nathan Wilder is reminiscent of Josh Baruth (the drummer on *Mare Vitalis*) in its complexity and rhythmic structure. It really gives *Illumination Ritual* some life and energy for a style that might otherwise be moodier. That's not to say that there's not some good emotion on here, but it's more reserved, not like the band was on their earliest albums. Still, there are some great moments, such as the way the guitar and vocals combine on "Cathedral Rings" and the vocals and drums work together on "30 Degrees 3am." I can't say this is the band's best work, as the majority of the songs don't stand out like the two just mentioned. However, *Illumination Ritual* certainly isn't the band's worst. It's got a pleasant feel and brings back

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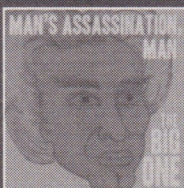
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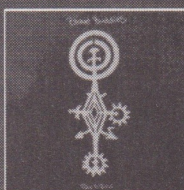
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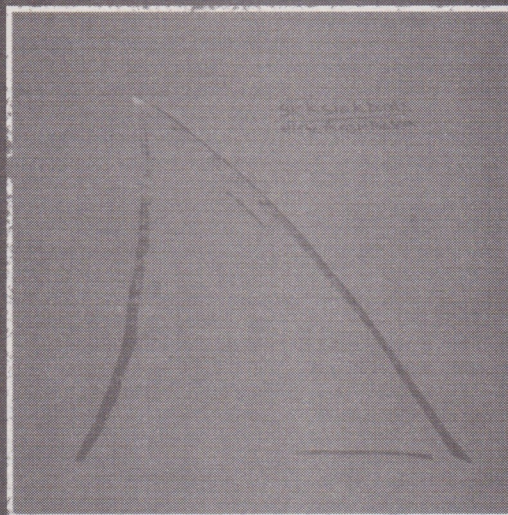
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reminders of what might be the band's finest work, *Mare Vitalis*. It's safe to say this is an album for fans, but not necessarily the best place for someone to begin to get into the band. —Kurt Morris (Graveface)

ARDILLAS, LAS: *Linda Niña: 7"*

Nice bit of swaggering Boricua punk from this Davila 666-related (though they apparently predate their popular relatives by many years) band. Though there are some commonalities between the two bands, including members, Las Ardillas leans more towards a '70s sensibility than a decade earlier, which makes for a cleaner, beefier sound and a bit more wiggle in the hips. The *Killed by Death*-friendly contingent will find much to dig here. —Jimmy Alvarado (Slovenly)

ASILE: Self-titled: 7" EP

Ah, bless the French Canadians, always wearing black and sounding like Motörhead. Oh please, I jest, relax *mon ami*. Asile are from Ottawa, have done at least an LP, and mine the same dirt as Born Dead Icons and even Complications. These dudes actually sing in French and have that galloping d-beat sound of Totalitar or even early Doom (without the gruff vocals). There's a definite Motörhead vibe to the riffs, you know that punk/metal sound?, which reminds me of the first Inpsy LP. This is fucking boss; so good I just went and bought the LP. How's that for a sale? —Tim Brooks (Chaos Rurale, chaosrurale.com)

BAD DADDIES: *Bad Year: 7"*

Abrasive blasts of budget hardcore punk! Screeching guitar dissonance and maniacal vocals backed by fist-pumping, circle pit tempos. Self-released, and limited to 137 copies. No hype, just enthusiasm and love for pissed-off, anti-social music. —Daryl (Central District)

BAD TATS: *I Need a P.M.A.: CD*

These dudes used to be called The Downstrokes and have been creating a ruckus for a few years now. Not sure why the name change, but that's cool. These guys remind me of your little brother's punk band: snotty, loud, and fun. These guys are probably the band that opens the show and spends the rest of the show drinking beers and laughing at people. I say fuck yeah! Don't be jealous that they have more fun than you. —Garrett Barnwell (Rockin' Stan, rockinstanrecords.com)

BADLANDS: *So Little: Cassette*

I didn't know what to expect from this set of songs; whether it would be acoustic or punk. Adrian Tenney is capable of both screaming the house down while she tears it apart with her drumsticks and soothing it to sleep while she croons over her ukulele. The sounds that came out of my headphones when I pressed play made such trivial concerns just float away. This tape is the most I've enjoyed an album in a good while. I really like the way it's recorded—all these wild instruments I can't even pronounce sound really great both through an '80s

boombox and a fancy work computer. The music is really interesting and her lyrics, as usual, are so simple yet thought provoking. —Rene Navarro (Ghostbot, ghostbotrecords.com)

BAM! BAM!: *Golden Haze 2: 7" EP*

The title track is anchored on a simple dark riff, from which they speed up the tempo then slow it back down for the chorus. Nice bit of work there. The remaining tracks more or less fall within the sorta lo-fi pop confines that modern college radio stations seem to find so swell. This isn't a necessarily bad thing, it's just the others don't quite live up to the infectiousness of that opening salvo. —Jimmy Alvarado (HHBTM)

BAZOOKA: Self-titled: CD

Like labelmates Acid Baby Jesus, Bazooka takes the garage punk thang and dunks it into a deep vat of LSD, combining the usual trappings—loud guitars, stomping drums—with a thick coating of reverb and a healthy reverence for early Pink Floyd. Diehards clutching their Supercharger 45s and lamenting the days before the Mummies "sold out" by releasing a CD might poo-hoo 'em, but the more rational will find Bazooka can make a fine racket with the best of 'em. —Jimmy Alvarado (Slovenly)

BIG EYES: *Demo 2010: 7" EP*

Really liked their tunes on a recent split with the Mean Jeans, so I thought liking this would be a no-brainer, and I was right. This builds on the promise

found on that other record with three rock-solid tunes that are equal parts tough pop and hooky punk, with a bit of swaggering artiness thrown in for good measure. Think I have a new fave band for the week. —Jimmy Alvarado (Grave Mistake)

BILL BONDSMEN: *"Dead" / "Peasant under Glass": 7"*

Not to make this too Detroit-regional, but take the belt-whipping of Negative Approach (buckle at the biting end), expose your back under the dim, disorienting fluorescent light of Cleveland's Homostupids, then feel the sting and the blood trickle down the back of your legs onto the plastic sheet. Bruised, pained music the color of dead fields, the sky before an earthquake, and wounds that never heal back to their original shape. Intense, splintering, exact, splattery, and penetrating. It's hardcore. It's progressive. Silk-screened cover. Released by the band. It's highly recommended. —Todd Taylor (Self-released, billbondsmen.blogspot.com)

BLACK BUGS: *Reflecting the Light: CD*

Like their more ADD-added labelmates Teledrome, Black Bugs specialize in a variant of synth-heavy punk/wave that is, in turns, aggressive and steeped with a brooding iciness, all filtered through a sonic sensibility usually employed by lo-fi garage bands. The results are catchy, with beats that seem to encourage late-night dance sessions in dank basements with black color schemes, and recall both the best synth-

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happy comps like *Minimal Waves* and the soundtrack to some low budget John Carpenter horror flick. This will get worn through in short order. —Jimmy Alvarado (HoZac, hozacrecords.com)

BLACKBIRD RAUM: *False Weavers*: LP

Before even throwing this platter on the turntable, I'm struck by the intricate pen drawings that span its cover. A giant wolf and Cthulhu tree people lay a city to waste as methane and smoke plume from crumbled buildings; a military troop struggle for ground. Like the musical accompaniment to a fantasy novel, a fold-out map duplicates the cover's preternatural bent with a crisp, detailed topography. The map loosely corresponds to tracks listing an actual Hakim Bay and Kropotkinrad, as well as The River of Filth and Fukushima Hulk, depicting a depressing crater. Raum amplifies the theme of rebellious hobbits taking part in anarchic revolution with liner notes quoting pieces on the French Anarchist Revolution to Michael Moorcock. Like anything off Arkam records, this five-piece employs a menagerie of folk punk instrumentations with washtub bass, pump organ, washboard and saw, plus novelties like a pump action shot gun and bouzouki. Vacillating between male and female vocals, "False Weavers" pulls in Fleetwood Mac's "Gold Dust Woman" with mandolin and female vocals in the spotlight, while "The Greymare parts 1, 2 & 3" are melodic, rapid-fire spoken word anthems, like a Henry Rollins record set on 45 RPM. Recommended. —Kristen K. (Silver Sprocket Bicycle Club)

BLASTED: *Exposed/Time to Die: 7" EP*

My first impression was that there was a lot of Midwestern hardcore influence here. After repeated listens, though, I'm leaning a bit more towards a mid-'80s Southern California foundation with a bit of that Midwestern brute force brought in through the windows. Gruff vocals, gallop tempos, muscley delivery, this'll definitely rattle your cage. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dry Heave, dryheaverecords.limitedrun.com)

BLOCKO:

South London Vs the World: 2 x CD

There are bands that take up places in ones memory like the smell of the London Underground or pub carpets at opening time. They are of a place and a time and as soon as you hear them you are instantly taken back as if it were yesterday. No-one needs to hear about my past, but in 1999 I was living in London with my wife who was transplanted from the U.S.A after I was rudely deported and we were missing her home and wishing the U.K wasn't so crap. During that period we listened to and loved our homegrown talent (however few and far between it was), bands like Southport, Leatherface, Hard Skin, and South London's own Blocko. They took the very English sound of bands like Leatherface, Drive, and Broccoli and added just a dash of the Gainesville "emo," if that's the right word (think Hot Water Music). It's hard for me to gauge this double disc with any kind of impartiality, just to say if you want to

collect the LP, mini LP, and numerous split records of this London staple from 1999–2003 then it's more than worth the admission price. Props to Aston at Boss Tuneage for continually archiving my memories. —Tim Brooks (Boss Tuneage, bosstuneage.com)

BORN WRONG: *Self-titled*: EP

This is a crusher! Heavy music and heavy vocals to match. It sounds like the singer is trying to be as loud as the amps. Fast and gnarled-out hardcore punk that hits like a truck. Also, despite all the bashing that is going on in the music, they throw in some catchy parts to keep you interested. As soon as the song "Torch the Place" starts, you are mowed over by their sonic attack. The playing is tight and urgent, and the vocalist has an axe to grind with the world. Not to mention there is a lock groove on here to piss you or the neighbors off. Excellent blast of the fast and heavy kind. —M.Avr (Schizophrenic, schizophrenicx.com)

BROKEDOWNS /

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL: Split: 7"

Brokedowns: In this life, villains broadcast righteousness through shotgun makeup blasts to the face and then privately gooping on young boys' genitals. Society is seduced by brightly-lit, shiny shells that track, harvest, and mine in monthly payments. Obey is a clothes line. I want nothing of it. The Brokedowns are the Roddy Pipers with sunglasses, bubblegum-less, shotgun pumped, hunting this alien race called humans. If D4 was made up of two

Billys and two Paddys? Math's not my strong suit. Illinois's poet laureates of lasering through the bullshit. Gruff, direct, tough, smart. Punk without modifiers. I've got Tammie Faye tears streaking down my face at the beauty of it all. Vacation Bible School: VBS have made great liturgical pop punk strides since their inception. Rambunctious and tight, forming their own identity beyond the cast, brightly colored shadows of the Chicagoan stained glass trinity of Weasel/Alkaline Trio/Lawrence Arms. An excellent split. —Todd Taylor (It's Alive)

BURNT ONES:

You'll Never Walk Alone: Cassette

Sunny, pseudo-psychedelic bedroom pop. It's wonderful, really. I feel the sun radiating from my stereo, followed by a cool summer breeze. It's a lovely day outside. Spacey and deliciously lo-fi with a great sense of melody. It's yet more evidence that Burger Records is one of the best labels putting out music right now. —Bryan Static (Burger, burgerrecords.org)

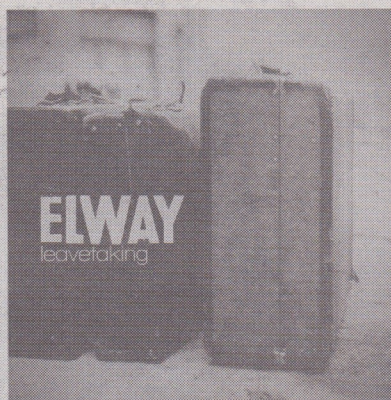
BURNT THRONES CLUB / A VOLCANO: *Split: 7" EP*

Burnt Thrones Club: Nice bit of simple, sleazy lo-fi rockin', not quite garage, not quite art punk, and yet somehow both. A Volcano: Veers a bit more on the skronkier side of the equation from their record-mates, but the song's effective and not averse to making a racket. Good stuff by both bands. —Jimmy Alvarado (Hovercraft)

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BUSINESS VENTURE:***Sleep When You're Dead: Cassette***

How's this for a pedigree: folks from Shang-A-Lang and the Thumbs, apparently. Four songs, and they're all dense, mean little numbers that aren't afraid to slow things down a little bit. The fact that they can use a freaking wah-wah pedal here and there and still sound tough as shit is entirely aces in my book. This is great stuff, firmly entrenched in that nefarious, half-lit land between garage and punk. I've received a fantastic batch of review material this time around, and Business Venture is keeping that hot streak going. —Keith Rosson (208)

CAIDOS, LOS: Self-titled: LP

From what I've been able to glean from the web, this is a special release for a recent U.S. (?) tour, which would explain the varied production values across the tracks. For the casual listener, however, it serves as a quick (fifteen minute run time) overview of their recorded oeuvre, and a fine one it is. Track after track of Argentine punk plundering through the areas between hook-laden hardcore and full-bore hyper-thrash. The band's tight and plenty pissed, flailing on their instruments across wild tempo changes in songs that zip right on by. Good stuff. —Jimmy Alvarado (Crapoulet, crapoulet.fr)

CALAFIA PUTA: Self-titled: Cassette

Gnarly-ass powerviolence from Tijuana, Baja California. What's not

to love? It's a recycled tape, having been recorded over some cheesy early '90s hip-hop, one that isn't even on their Bandcamp. I love these guys, admittedly because I know them, and they're cool dudes who are always willing to play a show where only twelve people are going to show up. They'll tear into it just as hard regardless. They truly don't give a fuck who is watching, and it comes across in an infectious way. Their name is equivalent to "Fucking Bus!" and they have taken it upon themselves to scrawl it all over the place. I've seen it on a police car. I've seen it on the dust of a door inside a militarized border. What's not to love? Calafia Puta! —Rene Navarro (Calafia Puta, calafiaputa.bandcamp.com)

CAMPAIGN: Black Album: 7" EP

It's been a while since I heard their last release, but if memory serves, this is a decided step forward from its predecessor. While things are still very much in the modern raspy (in this case also off-key) indie pop punk vein that's apparently all the rage, the gems can be found in the outside-the-box thinkin' of the guys strumming and banging. Of particular note is the guitarist, who often sounds like he's cribbing influences from Joy Division and other post-punk sources rather than the usual batch of string-slingin' heroes. As a result, the vocals, which would normally be the kiss of death as-is, actually somehow work within the context of the songs. —Jimmy Alvarado (No Breaks)

CASANOVAS IN HEAT: Ruins: 7"

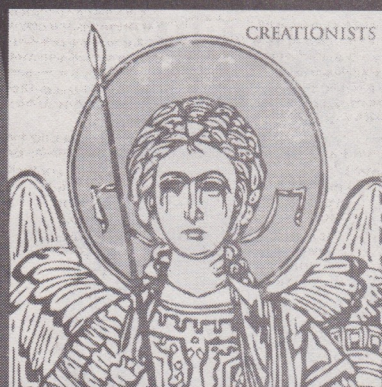
I don't know shit about guitar, but I know what sounds awesome. I know that when I hear a combination of chords that makes fireworks go off under my skin, there's something special going on, and there's definitely something special going on here. You know everything that Epitaph did wrong in the '90s? The too-commercial production, the sneering and posturing, so on and so forth? It's like Casanova In Heat does just the opposite, but holds onto the driving melodies, the pure jump-kicking energy. It's inspiring, and I'm listening to it over and over. —MP Johnson (Deranged)

CAT PARTY:***A Thousand Shades of Grey: EP***

This may be their best yet. Three songs. Very effective. The sound is darker, a touch bleaker, and the songs have a little more going on than before. I really like the dark, shimmering guitar and bridge in "Fatalesque" that brings to mind early 4AD recordings. Then there's the sprawling "Loves Benign" that moves at a good clip, with the guitar floating like a cloud over the driving bass and drums. The title track opens with a morose bass setting the mood before everything else comes in. The tempo picks up a clip, and the song has a feeling of hurtling towards the end, but without being a thrashing affair. Excellent record, to say the very least. —M.Avrq (Cat Party, catpartyca.com)

CATHOLIC DISCIPLINE:***Underground Babylon: LP***


A vinyl reissue here of a 2004 CD collection from one of Los Angeles's more mythical bands, a super-group featuring West Coast punk scribe Claude "Kickboy Face" Bessy backed by members of BPeople, Nervous Gender, The Zeros, and The Bags. Prior to its original release, the band's only recorded evidence remotely available to anyone but the underground tape trader circuit was the one-and-a-half songs featured in Penelope Spheeris's infamous flick, *Decline of Western Civilization*, a situation that left them without the level of popularity that X, Fear, Black Flag, Circle Jerks, Germs, and The Bags have enjoyed in the years since its release. They apparently never entered a studio or thought to weasel a board recording from the night's sound engineer, so what's collected here are audience recordings from three different performances, all of which are varying shades of rough-but-listenable quality, and all showcasing how danged good and creative a unit they were despite being little more than an occasional side project for most involved. Included is a Xeroxed set of brief but meticulous historical notes with pictures and flyer reproductions. Considering the original CD is apparently long out of print and this run is comprised of a thousand copies, all on pink vinyl, it might be a good idea to start a-hunting for a copy. —Jimmy Alvarado (Artifex)



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CERTAIN RATIO, A: *To Each...* LP

Formed in 1977, ACR, along with Joy Division, were the first bands signed to Tony Wilson's Factory Records. Held as one of those seminal post-punk bands, ACR released their first single sans percussion, "All Night Party" with the b-side, "The Thin Boys" and later covered Banbarra's anti-marriage anthem, "Shake Up." Their archetypal debut, *To Each...* was released in 1981. Martin Hannett's influence is evident in the jazz punk sound. He was Joy Division's producer. Simon Topping's disaffected vocals are much like Ian Curtis's. While ACR's lineup and repertoire would later veer into funk punk, sliding in record scratches and marimbas and drawing a Latin texture, here lays the nucleus of ACR. "Felch" and "My Spirit" use a funk slap bass percolating with trumpet notes, while "Forced Laugh" evokes Bauhaus with minimal vocals and screechy guitar chords stretched across a moody, expansive soundscape. Turning the page, "Choir" and "Oceans" could have easily been thrown onto Joy Division's *Closer* and none would be the wiser, with its remote drive of a classic time signature and absence of horns. "Winter Hill" closes it out with a sturdy backbone of Latin percussion adorned with guitar drone and mercurial vox. Topping would shortly leave in 1983, following the release of *Sextet* and *I'd Like to See You Again*, leaving bassist Jeremy Kerr and guitarist Peter Terrell to fend for themselves. In 1986, ACR would leave Factory and label hop into the mid-'90s, releasing marginally

received albums. In 2008, after a twelve-year hiatus, they released *Mind Made Up*, strutting a sleek, synthesized makeover with Denise Johnson, a previous contributor, on vocals. This limited reissue on red vinyl is a snapshot of a burgeoning ACR and that era when Gang of Four and Suicide were coming up, when genres were defied and redrawn. Recommended. —Kristen K. (Drastic Plastic)

CHOOSERS, THE: *Hanging Up on You: 7"*

Fine bit of power poppin' from Japan. They work the traditional angles to great effect, with jangly guitars, multi-part harmonies, and a squeaky clean sound. —Jimmy Alvarado (Bachelors)

CHRIS HOUSTON AND THE EVELYN DICKS / DESADIST AU GOGO: *Split: EP*

Peculiar record... Both bands have Mickey Desadist in common. Chris Houston And The Evelyn Dicks give us "Einstein's Brain" about Einstein's brain being in Hamilton. Who knew? I can't help but think of early Mojo Nixon listening to this song. The Desadist Au GoGo song is from 1986, and is about how some woman has, as the song title suggests, "Shit for Brains." Pretty much a novelty record. The Chris Houston track is the better of the two. —M.Avrq (Schizophrenic, schizophrenicrex.com)

COLD SIDE: *We've Had Enough: CD*

Straight-up Madball worship from the wastes of Florida with members of Vietnam, who always had close ties

with the New York DMS crew. Not surprisingly, this disc is on Roger Miret of Agnostic Front's label Strength. Chugging down-tuned guitars topped by gruff thug vocals. I'm a sucker for this NYHC shit, especially if it's done well and this band fucking nail it. The anthemic oi track "20 Years" is a jam, which shows another side to the band that I could totally get into. Dig out the basketball jerseys. —Tim Brooks (Strength, strength-records.com)

COLISEUM: *Sister Chance: 7"*

Look, I like Coliseum, but even I got a little tired of their straight-forward rocking by the time *No Salvation* came out. It's an album full of good single cuts but feels lazy and pieced together as a whole. When the band switched out drummers and Carter from the Ackleys/Legion (two very, very different bands from Coliseum), the shift in song structures was pretty much immediate and for the better. The recent switch for Kayhan (from Legion/Die Young and, incidentally, a band I used to be in) on bass has only helped that shift continue into something more interesting. I never would have thought Coliseum would have been able to churn out a 7" this down-tempo and with so much god damn swagger five years ago, but not only do they legitimately surprise me on their two cuts on the A side, they successfully crawl through Pere Ubu's "Final Solution" on the B side in a fashion that both does the original justice and sounds new and fresh. Old dog, new tricks. —Ian Wise (No Idea)

COLISEUM: *Sister Faith: CD/LP*

Do you ever wish Jawbox would reform? What if they replaced J. Robbins with the singer from Torche or Baroness? And what if they turned the guitars up, gave them some oomph and listened to Motörhead before recording an album? (What if I stopped asking "what if" questions and got on to the rest of the review?) It may be hard to believe, but that's what Coliseum's latest album, *Sister Faith*, sounds like. The Louisville three-piece has been around for approximately ten years, which is crazy because it seems like just yesterday Ryan Patterson, the singer and guitarist, was in The National Acrobat and Black Cross. And yet here they are, with a great thirteen-track rock record with a gritty feel and great production (thanks to the front man of the aforementioned Jawbox, J. Robbins). Some of the songs brim with fierceness, while others seem more laidback. They're catchy in as much as that is possible with post-punk music, but I certainly found myself singing along after a while and having bits of lyrics running through my head throughout the day. But in the end, it really is amazing how much this reminds me of Jawbox. Listen to "Used Blood" and tell me the opening guitar riff, throbbing bass, and drums are something J. Robbins and company wouldn't have come up with. It goes from that right into "Late Night Trains," whose guitar opening sounds like another J. Robbins piece. Listen—there's a fine line in the music

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world between being influenced by and copying another band. I don't know what it is but I know the difference. In this case, Patterson's vocals and lyrical content (approaching religion in a direct sense) are different enough to not be subject to cries of poser. Instead, the band has found a great flag to wave and a conglomeration of enough sounds to be impressive and not ridiculous. —Kurt Morris (Temporary Residence)

COMBOMATIX: Self-titled: LP

The Combomatix record has a hint of Reatards in the production that serves the band's frantic style of punk'n'roll. "I Have a Gun" is a full-on blaster that feels as if it could become unhinged. "Big Nose" is a jumpy standout as a three chord, back and forth rocker. Trashy guitars and overdriven vocals are prevalent. It's an album by a band that plays at one speed but understands the pace. —Billups Allen (Frantic City; frantically.free.fr)

CONDITION: Self-titled: 7" EP

An aural assault of Discharge-damaged thrash delivered in such gloriously fucked up ways as to make bands like Chaos UK and Disorder giddy. Unrelenting from the first feedback screech to the last. —Jimmy Alvarado (Rust And Machine)

CONGENITAL DEATH:

From My Hands: 7"

Grinding thrash with some awesome female/male trade off screams and plenty of tempo changes to keep shit

nice and interesting. It's not terribly original but it does have some sharp ass teeth. Would listen to again. —Juan Espinosa (Molars And Fangs / Ranch)

COPYRIGHTS: *Shit's Fucked*: CD / 2xLP

Hard to believe, but there once was a time when I actually liked pop punk. This, of course, was long before it became the pigeonhole du jour and the planet was effectively pummeled with an unrelenting deluge of some of the worst fucking Xerox clone post-post-post-post Ramones/Descendents/Screeching Weasel/Queers dog-bottom pie imaginable. The shitstorm has tapered off a bit in recent years, but it nonetheless continues to rain down in a more or less steady stream to this day and has effectively replaced what was once a creative path veering off from the hardcore-than-thou crowd with a billion songs about boogers, boredom, and boobs based on the same chord patterns and featuring some asshole trying to affect the perfect "snotty" delivery. Like so many others, The Copyrights play(ed) pop punk. Unlike the herd, they did so with a sincerity and singularity that nudged 'em well above the rest of the pack. Collected here are tracks from assorted singles, comps, and split releases for fans who missed out the first time 'round or weren't aware they existed until now. Don't usually find myself saying this too often about stuff from this subgenre, but this is definitely deserving of repeated listens. —Jimmy Alvarado (It's Alive)

COPYRIGHTS: *Shit's Fucked*: CD / 2xLP

So, it's come to this, a Copyrights retrospective. Everyone's favorite Illinois-but-not-Chicago pop punk band has compiled a bunch of their odds and ends into one coherent package. And I mean coherent. The CD opens into a gatefold of a collage of all their album covers thrown together. It's pretty awesome, actually. (Even the Art of the Underground singles girl is in it!) You know the drill, this isn't for the casual fan, this is for the completists, the nerds, and the groupies. Just like any other retrospective, we'll hear the good and the bad, the new and old all strung together in a loose twenty-four track package. What I've always admired about the Copyrights was their ability to create an earworm of a song. I know every Copyrights' chorus, but I can't say I listen to their records all the time or have ever been a hardcore fan. Do I recommend it? Sure. Some of their best songs are on this and some of their worst. It's really the songs from their splits with The Brokedowns and The Methadones that you should really want. —Bryan Static (It's Alive)

CRIMSON SCARLET: *The Window*: 7"

Nice bit o' death rock here. Manages to keep all the stereotypes in check—dancey beats without slipping into morose disco territory; big, effects-saturated guitars without slipping into bad metal territory; and vocals delivered right over the plate instead of overblown operatic howl or that hackneyed post-Sisters growl—to

deliver the goods. Kudos to 'em. —Jimmy Alvarado (Rust And Machine)

CRUDDLER: Self-titled demo: Cassette

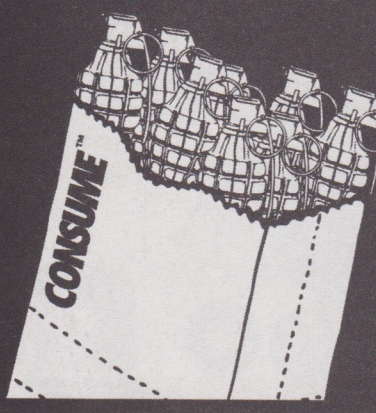
The demo tape is back, with all of the good and bad that comes along with it. This is a lo-fi recording with elements of punk and indie, like a lot of demos I heard when the demo tape was the main format for a new band. Most of this sounds like just the kind of rough and ragged melodic punk that many Razorcake readers would be inclined to pay attention to. —Mike Frame (Ranch)

CRUSADES: *Parables*: 7"

In case you haven't been paying attention, we love this band. Their driving intensity and commitment to blasphemy are rarely matched. And if this brief two song EP is but a preview for what their forthcoming full-length is going to offer, we're all in for one wild ride. Sometimes genres sell bands short, and that's definitely the situation with pop punk and Crusades. They're unique, they're inventive, and their melodisms are just one aspect of their overall sound. Can't wait to see what they come up with next. —Daryl (It's Alive)

DAHLING: Demo: Cassette

Kind of chaotic pop punk with yell-y vocals from Austin. These guys are probably really into the old Lookout Records catalog and newer No Idea stuff (it took me a minute to put my finger on who the vocalist reminds me of, and it's definitely Atom And His Package). This probably translates



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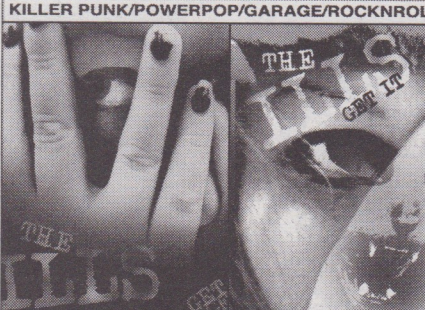
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really well live, but this tape doesn't really do anything for me. —Ian Wise (Help From Friends)

DEAD DOG: *Precious Child*: LP

Unapologetically pop punk, although not in the downstroke way. More in like, I dunno, The Hayden Sisters way (which I'll take over the former any day). Very '90s-inspired melodies and a heavy production that's actually not too far off from Jack Joseph Puig's *Pinkerton* job. Sweet and catchy as all hell without being a cartoon. It's nice to have a record like this that I can totally get behind. Great stuff. —Dave Williams (Dead Broke)

DEAD GHOSTS: *Can't Get No*: Cassette

Dead Ghosts reflect a spectrum of Nuggets-influenced punkness. Melodic bass lines and solid organ playing add '60s rock riffage to an album that sounds good in every gear. Slower fare like "You Don't Belong" finds the band handling the sincerity, while "That Old Feeling" and "On Your Own" are jumpy songs that keep the album moving. "Tea Stomp Rumble" is a surf instrumental in the style of Link Wray that captures an eerie, late night quality that sometimes sneaks into slow, '60s instrumentals. It's one of those unintentional things that probably happened just because the band is into it. These guys hit all the rungs on the ladder without being contrived. It's a good one. —Billups Allen (Burger)

DEAD TREND: *False Positive*: CD

Dunno a thing about 'em, but if the information I've managed to find is

correct, this is the debut release from old New England hardcore band who have apparently decided to record twenty-four years of back songs in a marathon seven-hour session. Twenty-one tracks of sloppy, rudimentary hardcore is the result, with ranting about Iran-Contra, cops, skateboarding, the invasion of Grenada, and working for minimum wage, among other things. Whether it's sincere or a piss-take a la Anarchy 6 I'll leave for others to decide, but, either way, they're pretty much on the bean. —Jimmy Alvarado (The Cabildo)

DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN, THE: *One of Us Is the Killer*: CD/LP

After fifteen years of being a band, one has to wonder if there is much of anywhere left for The Dillinger Escape Plan to go. Actually, I wondered about that a few years ago because it seemed like after *Ire Works* and *Option Paralysis* they had used up all their tricks: crazy free jazz-influenced metal, a few tracks of slightly Nine Inch Nails-influenced music, and/or slow songs where vocalist Greg Puciatto actually sings. Sure, they were good, but by the time the band got to their second album it seemed they had done the equivalent of hit ten on the volume knob and had nowhere else to go. *One of Us Is the Killer* follows the script of the last few albums, showing the band treading their unique body of water (granted, that water probably has sharks in it) over the course of eleven songs in forty minutes. The band is still immensely talented and tight, but

nothing jumps out at me and says they have reinvented themselves or have any intention to do so. The Dillinger Escape Plan are still masters of the sound that they helped develop, but that scene seems to not have proven itself to be of much importance without the ability to evolve. —Kurt Morris (Sumerian, sumerianrecords.com)

DISCIPLES, THE: *Redemption*: CD

Remember when I tore the new Fang album a new one a couple of issues ago? Well, I pretty much brutalized it (and I stand by that review), but I really wasn't expecting to think much about it again. I put this disc in and started listening without looking at the cover. I was treated to some solid, hard-driving punk with some of the rock'n'roll flavor of the Hostage Records stable of bands. I like that a lot. Upon checking out the cover, I learned that the singer is Sammytown of Fang. Whereas I couldn't stand the new Fang disc, this is really great. I have this theory that sometimes people involved with somewhat famous (or notorious) bands sometimes get stifled within the persona of the band itself. Once they step outside and start a new band with no predispositions, they are free to do something great... Or maybe I am really overthinking this. The bottom line is that Sammytown needs to continue with this band. —Ty Stranglehold (Malt Soda)

DISHONORABLE DISCHARGE / PEACEBASTARD: *Split*: EP

Heart First seems to be the "home of the hits" lately. So many great records

from that label! This one keeps the quality high. Dishonorable Discharge, from Norway, are heavy on the d-beat end, with a lot of low end, to-the-point lyrics, and choruses that repeat. (Not to mention the screaming, short guitar solo.) Peace Bastard, from Germany, crank out fast and manic hardcore punk with some d-beat elements and a vocalist who has a very abrasive, blown-out style. She sounds like her voice is destroyed beyond repair. Their song "Page By Page" is heavy on the urgency and speed. I want to hear more! —M.Avg (Heart First, heartfirst.net)

DISSENTION: *The Crude Wars*: 7"

In 1984, Orwell rightly predicted a condition of continual global conflict, result of the classic definition of fascism: collusion between big government and big corporations. Dissention's typically on the button with these two oil-based songs: the proxy war currently raging in Syria and peak oil, the fact that the world's oil consumption is past its tipping point and hard times are ahead for the planet if true alternatives aren't discovered and implemented on a wide scale. Musically, they have the trappings of multi-generational OC punk: Discontent in the gnarly/sing-a-long heft, Smogtown in the buzz, China White in the rotted pier, beach bum, tattoo-wipeout department. Smart, mean, and heavy songs. Good return-to-form stuff from a band that first made their mark in the mid- to late-'80s. —Todd Taylor (Bad Idea, badideamusic.com)

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EMPTY ROOM: Self-titled: Cassette

This very solid hardcore demo from Buffalo has a ton of panache. Mainly mid-tempo, straight ahead, and old school, these five songs are all toe tappers. The band is comprised of past members of White Whale, Everything Falls Apart, and Brown Sugar. With cool silkscreened packaging, this tape isn't just a slapdash attempt to follow the current cassette craze. If they're playing to empty rooms, something is even more wrong with this world than previously thought. —Art Ettinger (Feral Kid)

ESCAPIST, THE / SLACK BIRD: Split: 7"

Two above-average folksy punk bands that would fit in well with at a show with fans of Zydepunks/Gogol Bordello/etc. Both bands are from the same town in Finland and while The Escapist have more of a "punk" vibe to their sound and claim Zounds and Arctic Flowers as influences, and Slack Bird are a project band by the drummer of more crusty/hardcore bands doing a very stripped-down bass and mandolin folk stuff, the focus is close enough that the bands sound at home doing a split with each other. The production is far above average and the songs are actually pretty catchy. —Ian Wise (Parta, booking@partarecords.com)

EVERYONE ASKED ABOUT YOU:**Let's Be Enemies: LP**

Apparently, this was originally recorded by this Little Rock outfit back in 1998 and sort of disappeared

for a good ten years or so. Hearing this definitely puts me back in the mid to late '90s when bands like Braid, Cap'n Jazz, and the sort were making their mark. The music is heavy on the guitar, but poppy and light at the same time. A lot of layers, as well. Crashing drums, syrupy and forlorn guitars, tempos that rise and fall, and the dual vocals the give weight to the words. I really liked the presentation "Letters Never Sent," where the two vocalists deliver the words as a conversation between two lovers parting ways. It actually gives the words more impact. Even the way they repeat each other's words in "Taxi" drives the point home. A lot of love lost going on with this record! This is the sort of album to listen to alone at night. Only three hundred pressed, and that's it. So do what you must. —M.Avrq (25 Diamonds, 25diamonds.com)

EX-CULT: Self-titled: LP

Hot new Goner Records band! Not wholly garage or punk, with driving rhythm and touches of discordance in the guitars. A Ty Segall production, but it doesn't necessarily have what I identify as the "sound" of a Ty Segall production (see the following bands: any Ty Segall project; Heavy Cream. I've been saying it for a while, dude needs to make and patent a "Ty Segall Pedal." A little birdie tells me that a New York music shop did just that!) Ex-Cult is an intense live band, and this record has an anxious, intense feel but the mix seems a little murky. I'd like to hear some more low end (this

recording is less tinny than their debut *Goner 7"* but I think I could actually hear the bass more on that record) as I feel it would give the record some more oomph. —Sal Lucci (Goner)

EYES & EARS / SNAKE MOUNTAIN:**Split: 7"**

Eyes & Ears definitely play the subgenre of garage I enjoy most, which is to say Murder City Devils and Rocket From The Crypt-sounding stuff. It's not breaking barriers, but I just had a beer from the 99 cent store and it sounds rad to me. One song, though? I kind of feel like a one song split just isn't enough of anything. Snake Mountain play straight-up cookie cutter garage rock. Playing this genre, and still having the nerve to constantly tell me to "come on" while calling me "baby" is kind of funny. I don't know why. —Rene Navarro (Snappy Little Numbers, snappylittlenumbers@gmail.com)

FAMILY CURSE: Twilight Language: LP

It's ironic that DC, the most uptight, bureaucratic city in the country, produces punk that is so conversant with dance music. DC bands are known for chewing up reggae, new wave, and go-go, and spitting them out with chips of tooth. Brooklyn's Family Curse take that sound and crank up the dental problems until it's all saw-sharp grooves, snarls, and disco ball shards. File alongside Monorchid, Q And Not U, and Shellac. It's like they hear the party from outside, and it just makes them angrier. —Chris Terry (Doormat)

FEAR: The Fear Record: CD

I approached this one with a lot of morbid curiosity. While not a huge fan, I had seen them in 2009 and was impressed. The first record is a classic (even Slash thinks so) and it is a shame that the other records are out of print. Maybe that's the reason Lee Ving decided to send this one through the recycle bin. I understand that record deals are sometimes a raw deal. We've seen this with T.S.O.L. and Suicidal Tendencies, to name a few. Is it well played? Yes. All the players backing Ving up are faithful to the originals. Is this really necessary? Only if you are looking in Ving's wallet. I do commend him for giving the proper songwriting credits to the original band members. So maybe a few greenbacks will get to their families if this sells a bit. But will this replace the original? No, and this is something Lee Ving learned when he did a guest spot on *Three's a Crowd*—sometimes you just can't go home again. —Sean Koeppenick (The End, marketing@theendrecords.com, theendrecords.com)

FERAL BABIES / CHEMICAL ACHE:**Split: 7" EP**

Feral Babies: Their mix of (totally non-obnoxious) rock and hardcore influences makes for some spirited punk rockin' sans both all the wankery bullshit and macho chest pounding. There's nods to punkers past buried in there, but none so obvious that yer goin', "Oh, that's who they're aping." Chemical Ache: More of the same,

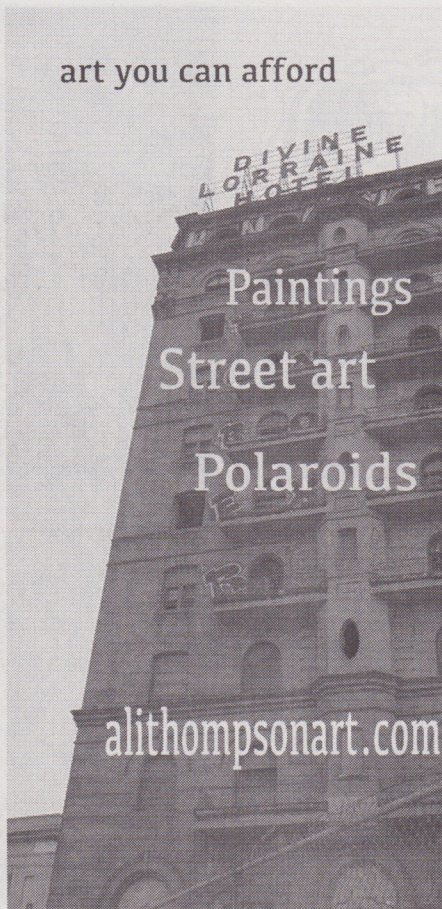
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with maybe a bit more early '80s Southern California beach punk in the DNA. Nice work all 'round. —Jimmy Alvarado (Kiss Of Death)

FLAT WHEELER: *Planning My Escape*: 7"

A very well done acoustic set of songs with intelligent lyrics, heartfelt singing, and excellent guitar playing. It's reminiscent of Bruce Springsteen's mellow songs, but with more biting lyrics. A really great single that shows a great performer giving his all. —Rick Ecker (La Escalera, laescalerarecords.com)

FOOD: *Four Pieces from Candyland*: LP

Ed FROMOHIO returns with a new EP's worth of boss tunes accompanied by Gumball's Eric Vermillion and the Cynics' Mike Quinlan. There are enough of the inevitable hints of FIREHOSE in the songwriting to satisfy fans of that bygone band, but the stuff here stands handily on its own, um, six feet. Four tunes of twangy indie-rock, smart yet catchy, strong yet imbued with sensitivity. Been a while since I've heard anything from Mr. FROMOHIO, and it was nice to hear he and his bandmates putting in some quality work here. —Jimmy Alvarado (Phratry)

FROZEN TEENS: "*Oakland*"

b/w "Footsteps": 7"

Expectations are venom stored in a jar and held up for clear display. Punk scenes have a way of ossifying, dinosauring themselves, against the best of intentions. It's a brave thing to hear a band that is obviously pulling

from contemporary, dark melodic punk but being more than a mirror or an echo to that music. While it's not surprising that there is much music to mine from the past; what's important is the deftness of translation, that the spark of creativity isn't merely an illusion of the past becoming present. So when I say Joy Division, don't think palsied, pantomimed, or dour-face put-on. Think sine/co-sine tension, carefully mapped sonic hills and valleys, patience, grey as an adaptable hue in the palette. This will help about five people, but fuck the metrics. Think Cat Party, *Static Thoughts*-era Estranged, and Synthetic ID put through the filter of "if the guys in the Ergs! pored over the Factory catalog instead of the SST catalog." A keeper. —Todd Taylor (Starcleaner)

FUTURE VIRGINS / TOYS THAT KILL:

Split: 7"

How to not sound like an asshole? Grimace. Dunno. These are two of my favorite contemporary bands. This should be a slam dunk. I should have played this so many times that the needle on the TTK side has bitten through the plastic and plays the Future Virgins songs backwards. Don't get me wrong. I like it. But I don't love it. And, to further my dipshittedness, I can't put my finger on it. There's nothing wrong. The songs are very good. But something's missing for me as a stand-alone piece of music. Something intangible. Some itchy magic. Future Virgins: Ashley's forlorn-yet-wise voice? Check. Meaningful, inclusive, introspective lyrics? Check.

Mike Pack and Cole Champion building fortresses of bass and drums? Check. Billie's guitar snaking like a caduceus around Ashley's? Check. The band having full control of their sound in the studio? Check. Toys That Kill: "Maybe This Cult Is Way Off" is like the love making I read about in how-to books with illustrations of hairy people: a slow-builder, foreplay-induced, long climaxer of a song. I've been saying this for years—infrastructure makes longevity possible. Ever since the TTK guys all got steady employment and Todd set up Clown Sound Studios in the garage in his back yard, the wheels on their productivity train have been moving heavy loads. You know it's TTK from the second note... fuck, man, why isn't this slaying me? Maybe it's just an indication of how much I truly love their back catalog. And in the end, these bands on an off day are still some of the best we've ever known. —Todd Taylor (Drunken Sailor)

GARDEN, THE: *Self-titled*: Cassette

Fun, tossed-off rock that uses reverb to alternate between haunted house surf music and early Joy Division. I like to think this was recorded by a bunch of roommates making up jams to play at their Halloween party, arguing whether they should go for "Scooby Do" or "Suspiria." —Chris Terry (Burger)

GATEWAY DISTRICT:

***Old Wild Hearts*: LP/CD**

A new full-length from a band that many figured was over. And guess

what, it's on par with their best material, if not their best yet. What happens when you strip the cocky strutting and superficial attitudes out of power pop? The answer may just be *Old Wild Hearts*. Ditch the skinny ties and unnecessary sunglasses, this is cold cut, Midwestern songwriting knee deep in immaculately catchy choruses that rise above the songs. Harnessing some vocal Silly Putty power, Carrie stretches hooks further and farther than previously known possible! Even when they're singing about an island twenty miles off the California coast, it still feels so studiously ingrained in the earnest, weather-beaten ways that the Midwest is known for. Another solid full-length from this outfit. —Daryl (It's Alive / Eager Beaver)

GEORGIANA STARLINGTON:

***Paper Moon*: CD**

HoZac's one of my favorite currently active labels because, unlike so many of their colleagues who prefer things safe and cookie cutter predictable, you never really know with any certainty what you're getting into with one of their releases until the music actually starts. Sure, they have parameters they more or less adhere to, but the breadth of scope leaves enough room for unpredictability and experimentation from both band and label to provide one the opportunity to purloin and repurpose Gump's "box of chocolates" simile and summarily hang one's head in embarrassment seconds after typing it. True to form, this release by three-

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piece outfit Georgia Starlington is a collection of haunting, seemingly opiate-steeped acoustic balladry tempered with hints of psychedelic country western, most of which are imbued with the same visceral quality as the monochromatic negative image of an empty road gracing the CD tray. The average punker will likely be put off by the morose beauty of the songs, but those familiar with the label's output will find it fits well within HoZac's oeuvre. —Jimmy Alvarado (HoZac, hozarecords.com)

GLÉN IRIS: *Round and Round*: CD

Well what do you know? More post-punk angular guitar-sounding stuff. Sure glad there is such a small amount of this stuff being released these days. Not a sound I have ever cared for much, so I am not even sure what to say about it. Kind of seems like this band is going for an Amphetamine Reptile kind of sound but things never get out of the British post-punk soundalike zone enough to get there. If you can't get enough of that angular guitar style, here is some more for you. —Mike Frame (Moodswing, moodswingrecords.com)

GLITZ: *It's Glitz*: LP

Heavy on catchy bits, Glitz's guitarist pulls from a broad library of power pop riffs with Glitterbest-era glam thrown in occasionally. The whole band is tight, but the guitar playing is dense with skillfully crafted, '80s-sounding pop riffs. It creates a great backdrop for classic sounding choruses like "(She

Don't Listen to Music." There are lots of well placed "yeah"s. "Sugar" is a standout for me. It contains the line: "Don't care what the teachers say." People discovering The Records or The Quick should look out for this one. —Billups Allen (Grazer, grazerrecords.bigcartel.com)

GO, THE: *Fiesta*: LP

The Go is a long-running Detroit rock band that boasts Jack White as an original member. Their latest, a twenty-song double LP with gatefold cover and delicious orange vinyl, uses *Revolver*-era Beatles as a jumping-off point for explorations of mellow, mid-'60s psychedelic rock. I hear some Kinks, Grateful Dead, Pink Floyd, and Canned Heat, all given a backbone of warm bass and huge drums. The production is terrific, and the songs well crafted, but the whole thing feels clinical and overwrought. If I want to spend an hour with people who won't let go of the '60s, I'll turn to the Booming section of the *New York Times*. —Chris Terry (Burger)

GOLDBLADE:

The Terror of Modern Life: CD

Fronted by John Robb of Membranes fame, this band have been plugging away since the mid-'90s to a certain amount of indie success, perhaps in part to Robb's former band. I never gave this lot the time of day due to them being a part of every big commercial festival back in the day. I don't know what the other gear is like, but this

CD is cracking, falling somewhere between the later Ruts, Killing Joke, and UK Subs. It has huge production, decent lyrics and a shit cover, so close your eyes when listening. —Tim Brooks (Overground, overgroundrecords.co.uk)

GRABBIES: *Anus Is a Pussy*: 7"

Well, I feel violated. This sure is angry and incoherent. The inside of the record sleeve says "this is idiot" and I'm inclined to agree. —Bryan Static (Fashionable Idiots)

GREMLINS UK: *Self-titled*: 7"

If the Marked Men make the best punk music, then the Wax Museums have made some of the cleverest in recent years. Gremlins UK fit in more with the Wax Museums school of thought. If it's very possible that life is just a joke, and verrrry possible that punk is just a joke, why can't I bring my own beer into the show? It's not like I'm gonna buy any from the bar! Luckily, I have Gremlins UK to keep me company in the proverbial back alley of my mind with their catchy, poppy, anglophile punk tunes blasting from the boombox. —Daryl (Meth Mouth)

GSD: *In Hades*: LP

Dark, heavy, melodic punk rock from ex-I Farm, Fresh Coats, and Four Deadly Questions folks. Occasionally reminiscent of an organ-free Murder City Devils (particularly in the vocal delivery), but really quite unique overall. The more melodic passages

definitely showcase a '90s skate/pop punk sensibility, but the songwriting never really treads any rehashed paths. I'll be spending plenty of quality time with this one, that's for sure. —Dave Williams (Dead Broke)

GUN CLUB, THE:

The Las Vegas Story: LP

When *The Las Vegas Story* came out in 1984, The Gun Club, in many ways, was at the epicenter of the second wave of L.A. punk (and taking big strides away from hardcore). Terry Graham and Patricia Morrison had come over from The Bags, Kid Congo Powers was the American Ramones Fan Club president. All three congealed around the aching artistic shaman/savant Jeffrey Lee Pierce. The Gun Club's sound was the convergence of two camps—the straight-up, rough-pommel roots rock'n'roll boot stomp of The Blasters and X, while in league with Top Jimmy And the Rhythm Pigs. The other camp was a band in and of themselves. The Cramps. Less openly manic, The Gun Club play a dervishing, dazzling, haunted, desert-swamp wooziness. This long player is filled with dust, blood, and broken things (lives and futures and luck) lovingly considered. Along with *Miami* and *Fire of Love*, many longtime fans consider *The Las Vegas Story* the three filthy jewels in The Gun Club's crown of achievement. From start to finish on this record, there's a shambolic, graceful power in the playing. It's somehow both primeval

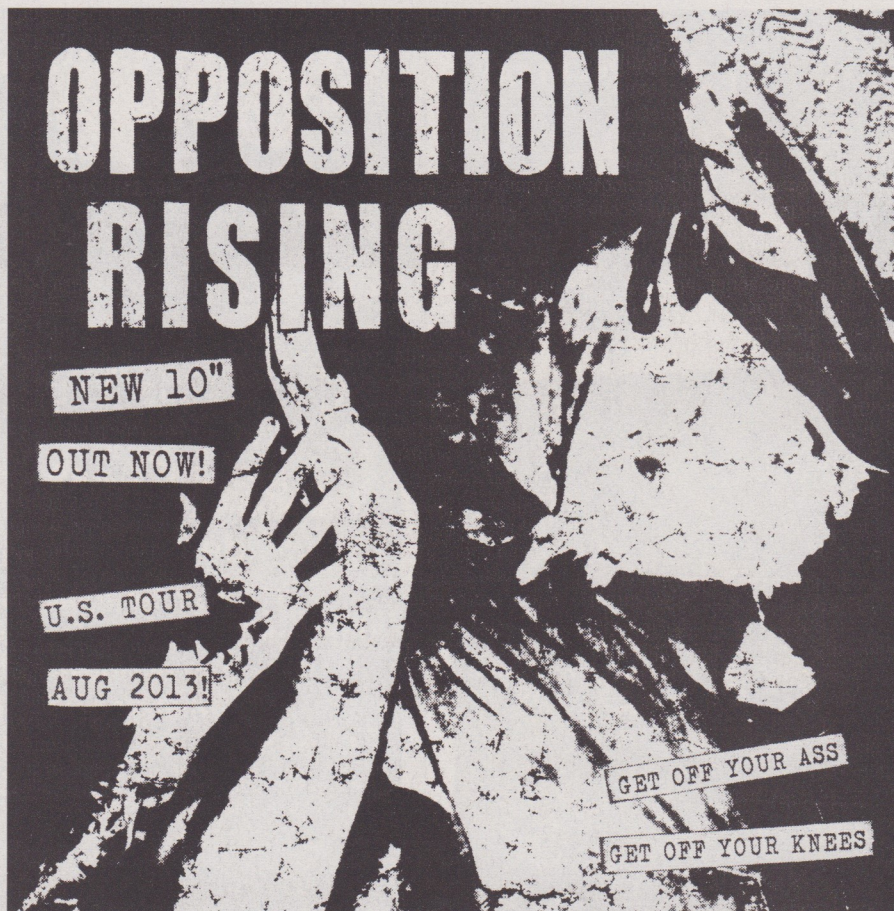


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and post-apocalyptic; both opulent and sparse; both degenerate and transcendent. At the end of the record, careful listeners' hands will be blacked from feeding coins into slot machines, their clothes will reek of retirees' second-hand smoke. They'll be heat-baked, wizened, with less money, but somehow a little bit richer. There's a lot of life experience waiting to be released in these grooves of vinyl. A welcome reissue. —Todd Taylor (Drastic Plastic)

HARD FEELINGS: Self-titled: 7" EP

Hickey/Crimpsine worship from Duluth, Minnesota. A dude-fronted This Is My Fist but with nasally vocals which thankfully don't annoy. Side bar: the best fucking record store in San Francisco put this out so you know it's a winner. —Juan Espinosa (Thrillhouse)

HEARD OF WASTERS:

Beer Whores: Flexi

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan's answer to The Spits, Heard Of Wasters is a goofy amalgam of all things great in mainline punk rock. First cassettes resurfaced, and now flexis are making a comeback. I got an 8-track player way back when TPOS started doing punk 8-tracks, so I'm ready if and when that format returns. In any event, Heard Of Wasters is terrifically silly and rocking all at the same time. A true full length from Heard Of Wasters is way overdue. Till then, their 7"s and this flexi are what to clutch onto. Just don't grab at it too hard. It's a flexi after all. —Art Ettinger (Wasted Wax, wastedwax.ca)

HEAVY TIMES: "I'm Single" "Unsolved Mysteries" b/w "Bath Salts": 7"

"I'm Single"'s the jam. It's got that gauzy vibe of driving through a dark city on a summer night, teetering between dangerous consequence and substance-induced not giving a fuck. Over the course of the other two songs, the sun slowly rises over the horizon. The city slowly wakes up. It ultimately finds the band in a weed haze, arriving home, into the bedroom, first surflicking The Jesus And Mary Chain then woo-ooohing at the end, almost sounding like a derelict, morning-after Beach Boys for several measures. I like these guys. —Todd Taylor (Hozac)

HEWHOCANNOTBENAMED:

Love/Hate: CD

The infamous guitarist of the equally infamous Dwarves offers up a collection of tunes culled from his two solo albums (plus three previously unreleased tracks) for your listening (dis)pleasure. As can be expected, the tunes are largely in the same pop punk/rock mold married to often deviant lyrical themes that more recent Dwarves fare has manifested itself. The songs are well-written, catchy, and should please fans of the man and his longtime band. —Jimmy Alvarado (Music Cannot Be Named, musiccannotbenamed.yokaboo.com)

HOSPITAL GARDEN: Mover: CD

Another round of prime indie-rock riffage here. As with their last release, they mine the best parts of the genre's

golden age and dish up some tasty, loud guitar pop that doesn't sound dusty, dated, or deleteriously derivative. —Jimmy Alvarado (Forge Again, forgeagainrecords.com)

HOUNDS & HARLOTS:

The Good Fight: CD

Having personally tired of the whole street punk and American oi genres years ago, I was not particularly looking forward to listening to this. To be fair, a weird, five color cover and a back cover shot of the lads walking down some railroad tracks was not exactly setting my expectations very high. Imagine my joy then, when I popped this disc and it immediately began to kick my ass! What sets this CD apart from most efforts of this type is clearly the level of songwriting that these guys bring to the table. They do such a good job avoiding most of the clichéd subjects that most bands of this ilk tackle, I wonder why they choose to identify with the above-mentioned genres in the first place (and I mean that as a compliment). Most of the songs are pretty hooky and memorable and the band's performance is energetic and believable. Perhaps with a bit of a drier mix and less reliance on the background gang vocals, this CD would have been pretty much perfect. —Garrett Barnwell (Skinflint, skinflintmusic.com)

HOUSE OF LOVE:

She Paints Words in Red: CD

Latest from a reformed U.K. alt-rock band originally making the rounds 1986-

1993. They kick down with some fairly laid back pop-mongering tinged with no shortage of psychedelic sensibilities to give things a nice off-kilter vibe. —Jimmy Alvarado (Cherry Red)

HUFF!: AGORhuffOBIA: CDEP

Are people still playing ska punk in a non-ironic way? It may only be five songs but it's five songs too many. High school is over. —Kurt Morris (Johann's Face)

HUSSY, THE: Way with Words: 7"

As easy as this record is to enjoy at surface level, with its catchy "whoa-oh-oh"s and cacophonous choruses, part of me feels like I need to play it a hundred times just to sort out what I'm hearing. There's only two people in the band, so the music can't be that complex, but at the same time I feel like there's always something going on under the surface that I need to puzzle out, because it might be the secret ingredient that is making me jump off my couch over and over like this. —MP Johnson (Slovenly)

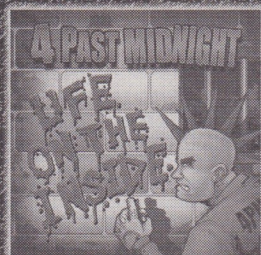
INFECTED: It's Been a Long

Way Down...: CD

Lexington's Infected returns with another solid collection of its odd brand of metal-infused pop punk. Sounding like what Face To Face would have sounded like if that band didn't abandon its metal roots, Infected is delightfully catchy. The metal lead guitar riffs are off putting, but somehow end up not being as obnoxious as they could be,

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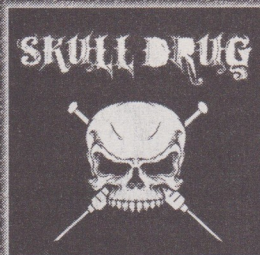
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given the context. Very 1990s in feel, tone, and even lyrical subject matter, this album sounds like a lot of bigger label punk records did twenty years ago. That era was a shitload of fun, as is this release. Some of the tempo changes and breakdowns don't quite mesh, but overall, this is too well put together to knock. —Art Ettinger (ADD)

INTEGRITY: *Suicide Black Snake*: LP
It'd be nothing new for me to gush over another Integrity release (or an A389 Records one, for that matter), so I'll try to keep the fawning to a minimum. *Suicide Black Snake* is somewhat monumental in the rather vast Integrity catalog in that it's the first full-length release to feature mastermind Dwid Hellion's main collaborator and shred machine Robert Orr. Featuring a few re-recorded tracks from last year's *Detonate VWorlds Plague 12*", *Suicide Black Snake* is classic Integrity with Orr's Melnickian-yet-unique twist (and a few curveballs—a harmonica solo, for instance—thrown in the mix). Now, as one whose coming-of-age was undeniably molded by *Fear Tomorrow* through *Seasons-era* Integrity, it's simply impossible for me to put any newer output on that same level. That said, as with 2010's *The Blackest Curse* and the slew of EPs in the last many years, there are definitely songs on *Suicide Black Snake* that are on par with that heyday, and the rest of the tracks are still brilliant, bleak, and unquestionably Integrity. If you already celebrate the band's more recent work, then, no doubt, you're in for a treat. And

if you're like many others who haven't paid much attention since those "classic" records, spend some time with this one. I imagine you'll be pleasantly surprised. Fuck yes. —Dave Williams (A389)

JOHN WESLEY COLEMAN: *Trans Am Summer Blues*: LP
"Whisper Mountain" b/w "Everything's Gone Grey": 7"
I think comparing John Wesley Coleman's two newest releases (at least I think they're the newest. The man is prolific in a Billy Childish kinda way) is the best way to see what makes the artist inside the man tick. *Trans Am Summer Blues* is a full band, mania-tinged party record. The album feels like a fairly fleshed-out collection of songs (much like his two Goner albums.) The 7" is the flip side of that (well, the proper flip side of mania is depression, and this isn't it... let's say for lack of better words). Two no-fi recordings, one in someone's kitchen, the other in someone's studio. The 7" feels more instant, like Coleman had a good tune or two rolling around inside his afro-noggin' and had to put something on tape. An eventual box set collection of his work should be called *The Many Moods of John Wesley Coleman*. —Sal Lucci (Tic Tac Totally / Spacecase, spacecaserecords.com)

JOHNNY MANAK AND THE DEPRESSIVES: *I am Not a Bum, I'm a Jerk*: LP
Johnny Manak And The Depressives is the latest project from Johnny Manak,

who has played in tons of bands including The Cliftons, Fang, and Resistoleros. A hearty mix of garage, surf, and 1977 punk, this profoundly ridiculous record is a blast from start to finish. If unflinchingly dopey bar punk is your cup of tea, then the Depressives are for you. If not, then go listen to a more adult work, like Rimsky-Korsakov's "Russian Easter Overture" or something. —Art Ettinger (Reach Around, reacharound.co)

JOYRIDE! Self-titled: LP
Heavily pop-influenced punk with sincerely delivered female vocals. Beautiful songs about shitheads and old friends. The vocals can ruin this genre for people, but on this record they're always strong and engaging. The lack of a lyric sheet creates a foggy mysteriousness to the stories. I saw a flyer for a recent East Coast tour they embarked on with Sourpatch and I can't imagine a better companion-band. Rhythm sections that are familiar with blast beats and breakdowns will always bring out the best in pop music. Fact. —Daryl (Lauren, Lauren-records.com)

JUGGLING JUGULARS: *Asylum*: EP
It's been a long time since I've heard new material from this band. Glad to finally catch up again! This is definitely my favorite record from them. They're still as tuneful as ever, and the songs have always been fast and catchy, but there's a certain fire on this that burns out of control. "Earth, Hell, Death" rages with the driving bass and drums laying

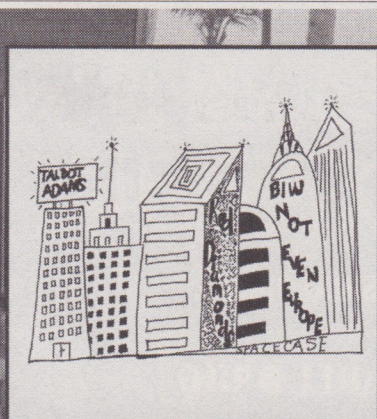
it down quick and forceful. I'm guessing the song is about factory farming, with the end verse of, "What is the reason for their existence?/Subdued in total isolation/ We suppress their true nature." The title track is about autonomous zones, and the line "A little hope for this ugly town (I want something beautiful)" sums it up perfectly. Each verse of "How Long Should We Be Laughing?" is like a powerful punch. The words are spit out with a vengeance against the racists affecting the world at large through social media and other dubious outlets. Excellent record from a great band. Love this record. It's a great jolt of energy and cleans the cobwebs out of my mind. Thanks! —M.Avrq (Juggling Jugulars, petteri.mikkila@gmail.com)

JUICE FALCON: *Night Wind and Animal Tantrums*: LP
Remind me to knock the long-suffering record assigners upside the head for this piece of work. Tense, lurching, jazz-infused hardcore. Taking the very worst parts of later Black Flag, B'last, and Whipping Boy with a singer trying to hit every octave possible. One of the worst records I've ever heard. —Tim Brooks (Snakebrain)

KAM KAMA: "Passer-By" b/w "Joseph Stride": 7"
There are no surprises here, but I didn't want any. They're keeping up with their peculiar brand of ambient, open-spaced sound which I really enjoyed on their recent full length, *The Tiled House*. I usually don't like bands that

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sound so similar to my post-punk idols, but somehow this band just rubs me the right way. The pace seems to have gone up a notch on the first track "Passer-By," which may be due to the new drummer. Whether you like that or not is up to you. I personally think it adds a little sizzle to the steak, and I say that as a man who hasn't had a steak in a really long time. The second track is twice as long, and just as good, with a heavy, bass-driven vibe. I hope their next release is a full length. I need a larger dose. —Rene Navarro (Sister Cylinder, sistercylinder.bigcartel.com)

KICKER: Not You: CD

Hot on the heels of their *Broke 7*" comes this full-length chock full o' punker ditties from members of Neurosis, Dystopia, and fronted by Pete the Roadie. The tunes are heavy with the UK82 vibe, but in a way that sounds more, oh, "real" than that "streetpunk" swill the average parrot-punk outfit is shilling, and also included is a choice cover of the Fuck Ups' "I Think You're Shit." —Jimmy Alvarado (Tankcrimes)

KILL, THE: Make Em Suffer: LP

Holy Mother of Christ, this is the record to make your parents shit their pants or wake the undead. Long-time Aussies return after what seems like forever with a record that sounds like a blowtorch to the face. Unrelenting, punishing grindcore, like Slayer on speed (they mangle a Slayer cover mid-stride). Think a punker Napalm Death or Pig Destroyer. Blast beats to your

face, bitch. Sickness. —Tim Brooks (To Live A Lie, tolivealie.com)

KNIFE THE SYMPHONY / SWEAR JAR: Split: LP

Knife The Symphony: Noisy, angular tunes that allude to the influence of emo before backpacks and whining became the order of the day. Swear Jar: Oddball, freakout jams that kinda makes one wish they'd secure a kickass slot on every punk festival out there and totally flummox the sensibilities of those paying outrageous sums to hear the same bands eke out the "hits" over and over and over. —Jimmy Alvarado (Phratry)

KNIFVEN: "Av!" b/w "Den Sista Javeln": 7"

"Av!" stomps along at a more straightforward punker manner, muscular without being meathead. "Den Sista Javeln," though, is the pick here, with slower tempos and dual-octave guitar chordage adding considerably more brooding to the pot while sacrificing none of the heft. —Jimmy Alvarado (Gaphals, gaphals.se)

LA LUZ: Damp Face EP: Cassette

Somber, surf-influenced garage rock. Santo And Johnny guitar reverb and some Seeds keyboard work streaked across a lovelorn, starry-eyed teenage girl's bedroom floor lined with all her '60s *Girls in the Garage* comps. I gifted a digital copy to my girlfriend who completely fell in love with these songs. That's right. I paid for something

I initially got for free: it's just that good. —Juan Espinosa (Burger)

LENGUAS LARGAS:

Ese Culito: 1-sided 12"

I'm not a fan of the Beach Boys. Vocal harmonizing, doo wop, and wood-paneled pop doesn't do much for me and not sure why aficionados get all teary over the drugged-out, fall-apart vocal layering of *Pet Sounds*. However... I love the first Los Lobos LP and all the visions it stirs (backyard parties, day drunk, sunshine, and a feeling of wonder, of everything being just a little out of place but oh-so-right). *Lenguas Largas* falls somewhere into those visions, perfect for a Sunday morning sunshine mimosa porch sit or pre-gaming your Friday night show-going adventure. Multi-layered desert psych that will expand your mind, spinning it alone or perfect backyard fiesta platter... dying to see this troupe live. —Matt Seward (Volar)

LES THUGS: Come On, People!: LP

By now you should know if you like France's brilliant, classic Les Thugs. One of the best known, if not the best known French punk band of all time, Les Thugs played typical anthems, but with their own atypical, almost Euro-pop spin. Their only live album to date, this record was recorded during their brief 2008 reformation. An extended version is also due out as a double DVD/CD package with even more Thugs hits as performed at the 2008 reunion shows. Foreshadowing the

sound that Jawbreaker would bring to the States years later, there's a "can't put a finger on it" quality to Les Thugs that makes them such a unique entity in music history. Live albums can be a real drag, but not this one. Acutely well recorded, *Come On, People!* captures the energy that Les Thugs still had, even in their all too brief reunion. *Merci beaucoup*, Thugs! —Art Ettinger (Slow Death, slow-death.org)

LIVIDS: 7"s

Three 7"s released simultaneously-ish (I think there's a fourth, but can't find it) heralding Eric Davidson's (of New Bomb Turks) return to wax. Apparently, the band has been around since late 2011 but I've only heard of them when these records dropped. Also featuring Jami Wolf (Zodiac Killers, Shop Fronts—a New York garage-punk band from the middle of the decade. Saw 'em a few times and liked 'em. Don't know if they ever released anything. Now it makes sense why Zodiac Killers played their last show in New York!) Davidson's vocals are strong as ever but the mix is pretty even so he doesn't drown out the band. Fans of New Bomb Turks won't be disappointed. "(Some of Us Have) Adrenalized Hearts" feels very '90s garage punk, in structure and song title. Much like the Turks' recordings, these are good songs but the band is probably best experienced live. I hope to do that soon. —Sal Lucci (Oops Baby, oopsbabyrecords.com / Slovenly / Twistworthy)

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LIVIDS: *Adrenalized Hearts: 7"*

Yet another single in the blitzkrieg that The Livids have unleashed in the last several months. By my count, this is one of four singles this band has released since the beginning of the year. This is just absolutely smokin', high energy garage punk featuring Eric of New Bomb Turks on vocals. Turks comparisons are inevitable given the vocal style, but that could never be considered a bad thing coming from me. The band also features Jami Wolf of Zodiac Killers and Glamour Pussies on guitar so all you Rip Off Records fans will wanna be all over this. This is just a goddamned great single. This band is maybe the best I have heard playing this style of punk in a decade. Here's hoping there's a plan to head out West sometime for some gigs. -Mike Frame (Oops Baby, oopsbabyrecords.com)

LOW CULTURE: *"Evil" b/w "Slave to You": 7"*

I had the best dream. It's 2013 and contemporary Bad Brains was secretly swapped out with Low Culture, like coffee at an expensive restaurant. Punks looking up to big stages are saved a rambling, lackluster reggae sermon and are instead blasted by one of America's best punk bands. Low Culture: anxiety and insecurity rarely sounds this confident and secure, amplified and powerful. Because no matter how much I say, "Lightning bolt strikes adobe gold!" about Low Culture, it'll fall on deaf ears to "thirty

dollars is a reasonable ticket price" punks. It'd be also be fun to see Bad Brains in back yard or a small club. If it was 1982, with back flips and hardcore, not the soft stuff they're peddling now, kind brother. -Todd Taylor (Drunken Sailor / Cut The Cord That...)

MANATEES: *"Cat Food" b/w "Tree House": 7"*

"Cat Food" is a mover with overdriven vocal delivery. I can't make out the lyrics well enough to tell what cat food is a euphemism for, but I think it's dirty. "Tree House" switches to a more tom-heavy beat. Nice record. -Billups Allen (Goner)

MANX, THE: *Bloody Chronicles: 7" EP*

This four-piece folk punk outfit releases their third EP, wielding mandolin, accordion, banjo, and bass. If The Pine Hill Haints are uptown, The Manx reside downtown with a little more dirt in their teeth and under their fingernails. Here they kick off these four new tracks with "Blood Gold," pulling from traditional structures with a crisp mandolin intro which turns a corner into a banjo-shredding, porch-stomping affair. Rounding out the eccentricities so prevalent in folk punk, the boys from Los Angeles toss in a micro Korg and tinkly glockenspiel heard in "Husky Tavern," distinguishing it from the rest of the herd. While they can clearly create a lot of melodic jangling, I'm not struck by much of a range as one song falls into another with the same time signature. Perhaps they could

take a few pointers from their uptown counterparts. -Kristen K. (Sweat Band, sweatbandrecords@gmail.com)

MAYFLOWER / JEFF ROWE: *Split: 7"*

One of those ol' split singles where each band does one original and a cover of the other band. Mayflower have a real anthemic pop punk kind of sound that I cannot find another way to describe than Dillinger 4-like. Jeff Rowe is an ex member of the band Boxing Water and seems to be opting for the singer/songwriter wing of the punk/hardcore retirement plan. Both sides of this record feature tuneful, well written songs, which is becoming a very noteworthy thing in this day and age, unfortunately. -Mike Frame (Kiss Of Death)

MERCHANDISE: *Totale Nite: CD/LP*

Totale Nite is another shorter release from the Tampa, Florida, band Merchandise, with five songs in thirty-three minutes, and none of them come in at over ten minutes, unlike *Children of Desire* (the band's last album), whose two best tracks both broke that mark. The first track on this album, "Who Are You," starts with a harmonica, reminiscent of "Hand in Glove" by The Smiths. Remember how it seemed so wrong for what you thought you knew of the band (harmonicas only work for country music and bluegrass, right?). But like "Hand in Glove," when you think about it, the harmonica works really well. The second song, "Anxiety's Door," has the band back in their 1980s Brit-pop groove, with an infectious

beat and Carson Cox's great Ian Curtis-esque vocals. "I'll Be Gone" is a more morose piece with electric guitar droning out before the introduction of acoustic guitar and cool synths. The title track is the longest on the album at just over nine minutes. It starts with what seems like a reprise of "I'll Be Gone" before suddenly stopping and shifting gears into a marching beat, guitar, and saxophone. Perhaps it's the inability of the saxophone to truly complement the song, but things never seem to jive and it sounds as though the song is always about to fall apart. Closing out the album is "Winter's Dream," something that sounds as though it was taken from a Tears For Fears or Depeche Mode album. It's slow and morose, but like some of the other tracks on *Totale Nite*, it has this one element (in this case an off-beat progression on the synths) that doesn't jive with the rest of the production of the track. Merchandise has certainly shown themselves to be a band that doesn't really care much about conventional styles (they're a bunch of hardcore punks playing '80s-influenced Brit-pop and releasing it on tiny labels when they've had offers from some of the bigger indies), so perhaps they said, "Yeah, this saxophone doesn't quite fit," or "This synth riff doesn't make things smooth, but who gives a shit?" However, it's really unfortunate to hear songs not gel after *Children of Desire*, which was one of my favorite albums from 2012. I really hope this is just a misstep on their musical path. -Kurt Morris (Night People)



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MIDWEST BEAT: "Apology"
b/w "Appaloosa": 7"

Catchy, bright, sunny pop. Reminds me of early Beatles, but what does that really say? Really, all rock'n'roll minus a few major exceptions shows some Beatles influence, if even unconscious. What I guess I'm saying is we're all fucked because The Beatles did it first. Thanks a lot, The Beatles. Midwest Beat might not be a musical revolution, but they have written a pretty good tune. The average Razorcake reader will probably be turned off by its up-beat country riffage, but its shine shows through the right amount of dirt making the gem all the prettier. Good single. I don't know if I could stomach an album of it, though. It is a little sweet. -Bryan Static (Certified PR, certifiedpr.com)

MIL MASCARAS: Fuzz: 7" EP

The title track is a fine bit of simple, repetitive growl. The remaining two lean towards the Kleenex school of post-punk, keeping things minimal but edgy. Nice bit o' work. -Jimmy Alvarado (HoZac, hozacrecords.com)

MISS CHAIN & THE BROKEN HEELS:
The Dawn: LP

Italy's simultaneous answer to the burning uterine sensations of Muffs, the Bangles, the Like, and Shannon & The Clams ((and, less obviously, to male-tinged Americanoid outfits like the Midwest Beat or Gentleman Jesse)), the marinara sauce of my ardor for this band remains at a

slow simmer instead of a bubble-popping percolation largely because they have yet to write that one real beret-flipper of a song that elevates the rest of their material by association. Lots of decent songs here, but no real prostate-milker; i feel kinda like i went to the county fair to see Katrina & The Waves and missed "Walking on Sunshine." Pass the funnel cake. **BEST SONG:** "Little Boy." **BEST SONG TITLE:** "Quack." **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** The crazy Europeans only capitalize the first word of their song titles, and are therefore out of compliance with the *Razorcake* style guidelines. Well i never! -Rev. Nørb (Bachelor)

MOTÖRHEAD: Self-titled: LP

In the early '80s, punk and metal squared off in the States. You had to make an either/or decision: metal dirtbag or punk cretin. Hair length meant a lot, how you were treated, if you were walking into a beating. Jean jacket or leather jacket were easy codes. There were serious consequences, silly as it sounds today. We're talking before crossover which is another ball of bees. Between the intractable divisions, between the Sunset Strip hairspray buttrockers (like Odin's assless chaps with suspenders, egregious Spandex and hot tub abuse) and the hardcore punk equation of hair = shit hippie, one band, Motörhead, and one man, Lemmy Kilmister, was the keystone, the détente that both sides agreed didn't slurp shit.

Motörhead built the bridge between the two camps that hated each other. Make no mistake, dark waters still run deep beneath it to this day, but Kilmister built a durable brick monument with his sturdy hands. Motörhead's metal wasn't fluffy, wasn't poppy. It was, and is, dangerous: face-moley, zit-rocky in a Hawkwind-meets-Sabbath way. It was straight-forward, not solo-drenched, Chuck Berry-informed, wank-in-check, and hard, which punks got behind. (Let us not overlook the power that the bullet belt and all-black attire has had on punk accessorizing.) Motörhead's song topics were unabashedly rock'n'roll: fucking, white drugs, brown liquors, WWII tank battles, gambling, and bad luck. It's not PC music. Nor is in anti-PC. It's rock'n'roll. This is a re-issue of the first 1977 LP, originally on Chiswick. Lemmy, Phil "Philthy Animal" Taylor, and "Fast" Eddie Clarke ran their black flag up the pole and let it fly, creating the rarest of rare: a place where people of different nation-states of music who fucking hated one another's guts could celebrate the power of music together with few getting stabbed or shot or bombed or threatened with mutual annihilation. No small feat. I'll end with a piece of unsolicited advice: look beyond "Ace of Spades," (which isn't on this record), dive into Motörhead's nineteen other studio albums, and revel in this superpower's consolidation of punk and metal. Hail the War-Pig bastards. -Todd Taylor (Drastic Plastic, drasticplasticrecords.com)

MOUTHBREATHERS:
Nowhere Else to Go: 7"

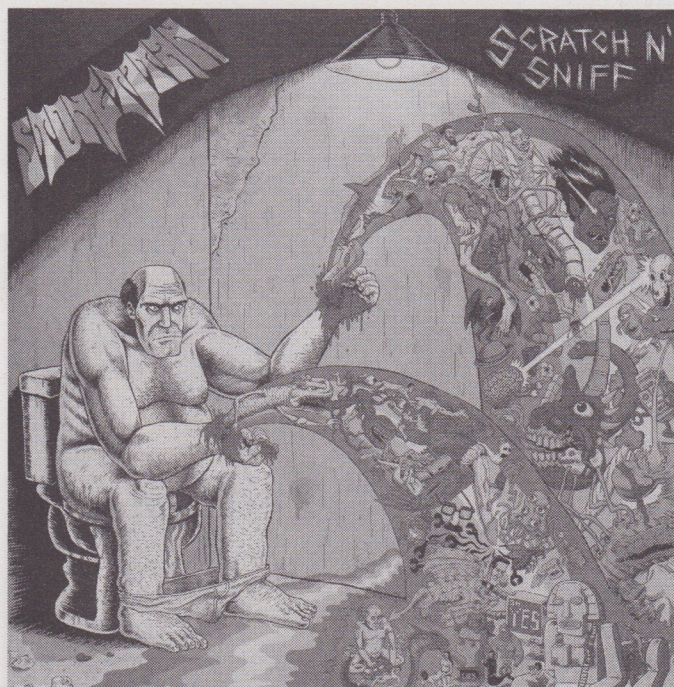
Based on a previous single, I was expecting some more dour garage punk from 'em, but this is a bit different. The title track is a rip-roarin' bit o' punk stoppage with a smidge of surf in the guitar solo. The flip continues along the same lines with a keyboard breakdown replacing the Dick Dale worship. Between this and its aforementioned predecessor, I'm guessing any future full-length will be quite the bee's knees. -Jimmy Alvarado (Slovenly)

MULLTUTE: Self-titled: EP

Whoa-ho-hoooo! This record is fargin' awesome! A modern day band cranking out some early style hardcore punk with total abandon. Sounds like a lost recording from 1981. The style is raw and abrasive, and the delivery is urgent, not to mention catchy as well. It's the sort of record where you'll pound in time to the music on a table like it's a set of drums. Six songs of greatness on this thing! These songs charge with pure attitude and a bit of recklessness. They also have some brains in the lyrical department, proving not all present day bands sing about nonsense. This is a "must get" record. -M.Avr (Heart First, heartfirst.net)

NAAM: Vow: CD

An unholy mix of Tangerine Dream, Pink Floyd, and Black Sabbath's "Planet Caravan" spread across an entire full-length release. In short, the



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kinda shit that'd give Syd Barrett night terrors. —Jimmy Alvarado (Tee Pee)

NAKED AGGRESSION / ALL OR NOTHING H.C.: Split LP

Angry music with political intent. Fuck the system and whatnot. Naked Aggression has a twenty-plus year long history and All Or Nothing H.C. started in the late '90s. At certain point, music like this feels like it's a game of Madlibs. "Fuck (neo-conservative buzzword)." "We're being (word implying mass public has no free will)-ed." It's not that I disagree with the message, but the lyrics feel too simplistic for the ideas that are trying to be addressed. Political commentary is a tricky game. For fans of The Exploited, mohawks, and studded belts. —Bryan Static (Emancypunx, emancypunx.com)

NATO COLES AND THE BLUE DIAMOND BAND: Promises to Deliver LP

Alright, here goes. Sometimes there are people in our particular music community who just stand head and shoulders above most others. True musicians with innate abilities and quite obviously encyclopedic wells of reference with a grasp on their craft that most can never hope to achieve. Individuals who seem almost *too* talented, clever, and fully-realized to belong to what "outsiders" would consider a genre built on cutthroat delivery-yet-amateur ability. For me, from the first time I heard "Flash Infatuation," NATO Coles has been one

of these rare gems. While the Modern Machines gave us a glimpse of NATO's gifts, and Radio Faces showcased even further progression into what he'd become, it wasn't until Used Kids' 2009 LP *Yeah No* that I feel like NATO found his own stream. For four years I've spun this record constantly, repeatedly shocked and awed by the Westerberg-by-way-of-Springsteen-via-classic-Motown-yet-somehow-unique songwriting and performance. And fuck, I was truly heartbroken when I learned that I was seeing what was reported to be Used Kids' last show at Fest 8. I knew, however, that it'd be no time before NATO was back with something new, and if history were any indication, even better. Fast forward to Awesome Fest 5 in San Diego and my first peek at the Blue Diamond Band. Granted, the set was peppered with tracks from NATO's previous output, but the band was on point and I was thrilled with the potential that jumped and howled and strutted before me. Skip to The Fest 11 in Gainesville and a setlist comprising the band's new material. Jaws on the floor, mile-wide smiles, and beers being danced happily from their cups: NATO and company tore Nelly's down and I knew that my man had trumped his already-amazing earlier self. And now, listening to *Promises to Deliver*, care of that cutie Mike Dumps, I can barely believe my ears. Immediately, I knew that I was hearing something I'd deeply love forever. Flawless performances and a sound reminiscent of one crafted by a young Jimmy Iovine aside, these songs

are on an entirely new level. To attempt to justly describe them individually, or as a whole, or even how I personally feel when listening to them would inevitably fall well short. It is quite simply a brilliant, passionate, unbelievable record from a man (and his band) who has reached the staggering potential hinted at in those Modern Machines songs. To me, it could very well be the high point in our little world, in recent memory. It is almost *too* good. Almost. And at the risk of getting *way* too corny about it, I honestly want to thank NATO for these songs and so many before them. Dude: wow. I really hope you're so proud. Because I'm even fucking proud that this came out of something I've been a part of for so long. Dang. Dude has delivered. —Dave Williams (Dead Broke)

NEIGHBORHOOD BRATS: Birth Right 7"

You know, I'm really amazed that in 2013 we still have to put up with people spouting the whole "punk ended in '79" or "hardcore was dead by '84" shit. Equally, these people seem utterly stunned that there are amazing bands cranking out killer punk rock today. If I am ever asked for an example of this, I almost always tell them to check out Neighborhood Brats. If there is any hope for these bitter, cranky old fucks to get a clue, this band is it. I became a fan from the very moment I heard their debut (courtesy of the review material of this very zine) and by now, I could be considered a zealot. Yes, they are that good. After the debut came a couple of great 7"s (*We Own the Night*

and *Ocean Beach Party*) and now I'm happy to report that streak continues with this new one. Spastic and relentless are a couple of adjectives that come to mind. The music is tightly wound and Jenny is like a fusion reactor. She is pumping out massive amounts of energy but you just know she is on the verge of an explosion that is going to take most of the coastline out. Listening to this makes my blood tingle and the hair on my arms stand up. Three new NB songs and a Youth Of Today cover to complete the package. I like to imagine those jaded bastards hearing Neighborhood Brats for the first time and realizing that there is a band out there right now putting a lot of their old heroes to shame. Wake up and get with the Brats! —Ty Stranglehold (Deranged)

NEO CONS: Idiot Circus: 7" EP

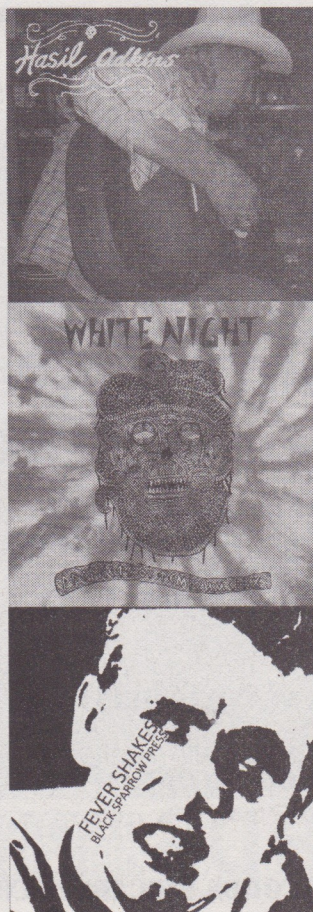
Loosely delivered hardcore, rarely getting faster than a moderate trot and slightly reminiscent of Condemned To Death, with maybe a wee bit of the Fartz thrown in for texture. —Jimmy Alvarado (Deranged)

NIGHT BIRDS:

Born to Die in Suburbia: LP

Releasing your second album has got to be a bit nerve racking. Especially if you are Night Birds and you are following up one of the most amazing debuts in recent memory (2011's *The Other Side of Darkness*). I can't think of anyone who disliked it. The problem is, once you've released an album that good the world has something to measure you against and that can

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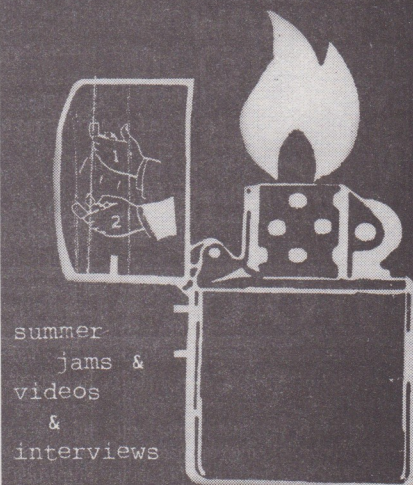
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backfire in a hurry... Unless you are the goddamn Night Birds, who have managed to not only match their stellar debut, but surpass it! *Born to Die in Suburbia* takes the DNA encoded in the preceding records and injects them with a new vitality strand like some kind of Dr. Moreau-like experiment. The results are breathtaking. From the introductory cover of the theme from *Escape from New York*, to the album closing "Golden Opportunity" (which happens to be my favorite song on here), the album is damn near flawless. All the things that make Night Birds great are here. The relentless beat, the surf-damaged guitar, and the depraved tales of horror, science fiction, and everyday weirdness, but there is something more. There is a tough urgency that wasn't there before. It's an element that pushes the album to the next level. I can't stop listening to it. Another interesting change in gears is the inclusion of a couple of slower tunes ("Nazi Gold" and "Less the Merrier"). They add a new texture to the album and are perfectly placed. Without a doubt, this will be glued to my stereo for the summer. Night Birds are one of the best damn bands out there playing today. -Ty Stranglehold (Grave Mistake)

NIGHT BIRDS:

Maimed for the Masses: 7" EP

With the title track, Night Birds add to the storied punk tradition of wrestling songs, dedicating this one to seventeen-time title holder and children's book author Mick

Foley (who's wrestled under the names Mankind, Dude Love, Cactus Jack). Youtube "Hell in a Cell June, 1998" and see a man almost die. The twist is that the Frankensteinian monster seeks love, understanding. For that to happen, he must self-immolate, make himself more of an outward monster. Night Birds, for all accounts and purposes, are the sonic equivalent of that monster. A monster with a high pain threshold. A monster that can withstand a fall from the top of a cage onto the bare ground. A monster with kicked-in teeth, blood dripping out from embedded tacks across the chest, smiling, leering, wiping the back of its hand, striding to you, foul-breathed. "That the best you got? Keep naming past punk greats and watch 'em crumple under my bandaged hands." Today. At the top of the card. Superb four-songer. -Todd Taylor (Fat)

NIRVANA: *Cult: Cassette*

This is the original Nirvana, not the Seattle grunge band, but the United Kingdom-based progressive rock band active in the late 1960s and early 1970s. You get twenty-five songs on this compilation of their career. No grunge rock here, instead you get a mix of psych pop, and some British folk rock. With the large amount of songs on here, you will definitely get a treat from the well crafted and interesting songs and maybe when you tell someone that you like Nirvana, it won't be the over-hyped one that you're talking about. Only three hundred cassettes made, so grab one fast. -Rick Ecker (Burger, burgerrecords.org)

NOVICE, THE: *Self-titled: 7"*

There are precious few things you can bank on in the world of music, but one thing for certain is that anything that any of the members of The Marked Men do musically will be great. Their bands are a laundry list of awesome. Mind Spiders, Potential Johns, High Tension Wires, Low Culture... The Novice. I actually saw The Novice play a record store (Woool! Trailer Space!) in Austin, but my first time in Texas, my heat-addled brain couldn't really comprehend what was going on... I should amend that. I *heard* The Novice playing, while I was outside said record store pounding back beer after beer to try and beat the heat. I'm glad I finally get the chance to hear them again, this time in the confines of my igloo. Do I even need to tell you how great this is? I didn't think so. Just get it. -Ty Stranglehold (Dirtnap)

NUMBER 9 BLACKTOPS, THE:

Cool on My Right: CD

A dude with a 'stache, a dude with a beard, and a hippie wearing a Motörhead shirt play bad bar rock. -Jimmy Alvarado (Part, rockabilly.de)

OBLIVIONATION: *Demo 2012: Cassette*

Three tracks of pissed-off hardcore punk from this Massachusetts-based quartet. For only three songs, this demo is filled with riffs sure to inspire furious bedroom moshing and steering wheel pounding while driving. Lyrically, the band talks about dealing with mental health issues in "Compulsive

Paranoia," ignorance in our society in "Proud to Be Dumb," and telling the Westboro Baptist Church to fuck off in "Closet Country"—all sentiments I can get behind. Based on these three tracks, I'm stoked to get my hands on Obliviation's forthcoming LP, and you should be as well. -Paul J. Comeau (Bleeding Edges, weareoblivination@gmail.com)

OBNOX: *Canabille Ohio: 2 x 7" EP*

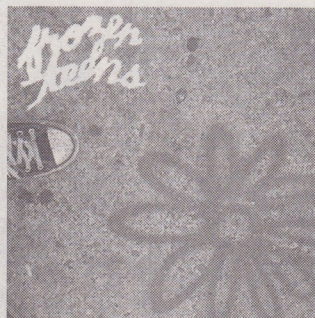
Was a bit put off by the pot-addled cover art, but Todd suggested I look past that and give it a try, and I'm glad he did. Dunno who is responsible, but this is quite an inspired bit of lunacy. Equal parts hip hop, art-damaged punk, psychedelia and general racket-making mix, and matched into something more acid than pot-friendly, right down to the lysergic covers of the Urinals' "I'm a Bug" and the McCoys' "Hang on Sloopy." -Jimmy Alvarado (Slovenly)

OCCULT SS: *Teeth in the Dark: 7" EP*

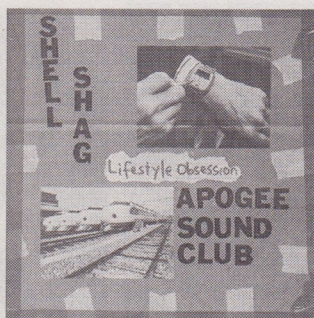
Crust punk that's a little cleaner and less "black" in production and structure than others. The faster moments are often more Discharge than Amebix, but you can still almost hear the hair growing when they shift into lower gear. Not my genre of choice, but they ain't bad at what they do. -Jimmy Alvarado (Rust And Machine)

OLD FLINGS: *Spite: LP*

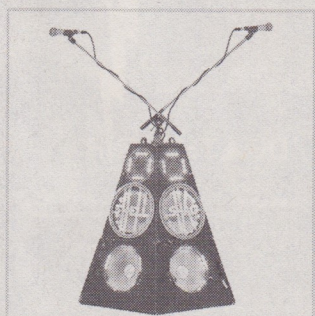
Depressing and uplifting at the same time, fans of Samiam won't want to miss Old Flings. Already on its second



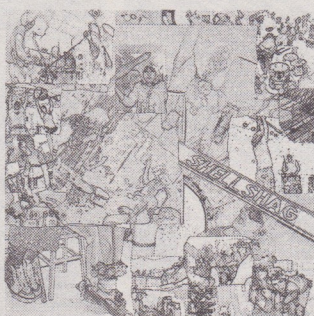
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pressing, there's quite a buzz about *Spite* in some circles, and for good reason. The Samiam comparison would be a lazy one if it weren't for the fact that this record is virtually interchangeable with Samiam at its best. Hailing from Asheville, NC and starting out as an experiment to electrify an already prominent acoustic musician's songs, Old Flings is one of those bands that quickly gains legions of fans. I'm not sure that the brooding mindset is for everyone, but those into the more gloomy end of punk will dig it. —Art Ettinger (Self Aware, selfawarerecords.com)

PAINT IT BLACK: Invisible: 7"

Downtuned, hoarsely shouted youth crew hardcore with melodic touches. Nothing new, but played with the proper conviction. Six songs. Wear a hoodie in the pit. Get red in the face imitating the singer. Grow out of it, then work out to it fifteen years later. —Chris Terry (No Idea)

PARASITIC TWINS: Self-titled: 7"

Five angry punk songs that sound exactly the same. In fact, they sound so much the same that at first I thought there might have been a pressing plant error. But no, just a creativity error. —MP Johnson (Reality Is A Cult)

PEACH KELLI POP: Self-titled: LP

House and basement shows are a rarity in Birmingham, AL. Basement shows featuring bands I'm willing to leave my house for, even rarer still. So being provided a magic moment with Peach

Kelli Pop (with Mean Jeans providing the rhythm section) via the gracious kids of God's Butt basement was in incredible weekday night gift. A head-nodding, booty-twisting, beer-can-emptying good time was had by all thirty attendees that evening... and I'll pick up any PKP release from then on. This LP definitely sticks to the thinner-sounding '60s pop formula championed by Burger, but its ability to conjure the good-time party vibes of their live show gives it heft. Highly caffeinated soda plus candy bars plus spinning this record and you may not have an unsmashed stick of furniture in your room. —Matt Seward (Burger)

PERIKATO: Kovat Ajat: 7" EP

Über-thrash freakout from a Finnish band with sloppy warp factor nine beats and ADD lengths. The Discharge influence isn't quite so obvious, but they clearly can fuck shit up with the best of 'em. —Jimmy Alvarado (Ekro, ekrorecords.com)

PITY PARTY / BAD MAMMALS:

Split: 7" EP

Pity Party: Paroxysmal punk delivered with much verve and no apparent fear of switching gears mid-song and sending the wagon careening down a different road. Bad Mammals: More standard indie-punk faire with some pretty bad vocals. —Jimmy Alvarado (No Breaks)

PITY PARTY: Do a Little Dance: 7"

Yes, the old "ex-members of a great band that has previously graced the

cover of *Razorcake*" tag could be used here, but let's skip it—Pity Party, pleasantly, needs absolutely zero name-dropping to help 'em out. This shit is fantastic on its own: *Do a Little Dance* contains a handful of compressed, spring-wound punk songs, all of them exploding right out of the gate ala Bitchin' or This Is My Fist. Catchy and thoughtful and just fantastic, man. A great surprise, and more than worthy of repeated listens. —Keith Rosson (Bloated Kat)

PLEASURE LEFTISTS: Self-titled: 7"

Spot-on post-punk here, with a pitch-perfect mix of brooding bass lines, clean channel guitars, and howling vocals. I could probably gripe about the mono mix of the tracks—that bass is screamin' out for stereo, dammit!—but, to be honest, I'm so busy playing this bad boy over and over that ultimately it really doesn't matter either way. Here's hoping a full-length is on the way. —Jimmy Alvarado (Katgora Works)

PLOW UNITED: "Act Like It" b/w "Little Bit of Hatred": 7"

Let me say this: on the strength of hearing these two songs (less than four minutes of combined music) I was driven to seek out and purchase much of Plow United's back catalog. That's some songwriting, okay? That's how good they are. And a testament to how lucky us reviewers are sometimes. The A-side's a cut from their new album, *Marching Band*, with the flip exclusive to this record. Both songs are stupidly

catchy and skull-deep in a soaring, dark, and anthemic quality that manages to become redemptive by their sheer awesomeness; the fact that they do it twice, and do it so effortlessly, and do it when their *last record came out fifteen years ago*, well, I'm impressed. You know those singing Christmas cards? You open 'em up and they play a little tune? I wish this issue of *Razorcake* was like that: "Little Bit of Hatred" would start playing whenever you opened up the pages. If you can't guess, this one's recommended. —Keith Rosson (Kiss Of Death)

PRETTY BOY THORSON AND LIL HAPPINESS: I Ain't Gonna Beg: 7"

The world wants me to listen to Thin Lizzy. Listening to Thin Lizzy is my destiny. I am not going to resist anymore. There's no point, because Thin Lizzy is there everywhere I turn. It's on the T-shirt of the guy at the record store. It's playing when I walk into the ice cream shop. My friend has even worked several Thin Lizzy-related jokes into her comedy routine. And now it's on the B-side of this record, a cover of "Running Back," channeled through Pretty Boy Thorson And Lil Happiness, forcing me to play it over and over again. Fine! I'm into Thin Lizzy now, okay! And I kind of like the Pretty Boy Thorson gang too. —MP Johnson (A.D.D.)

PROJECT EKAN: Self-titled: LP

By-the-numbers Swedish modern streetpunk. Doesn't really add or



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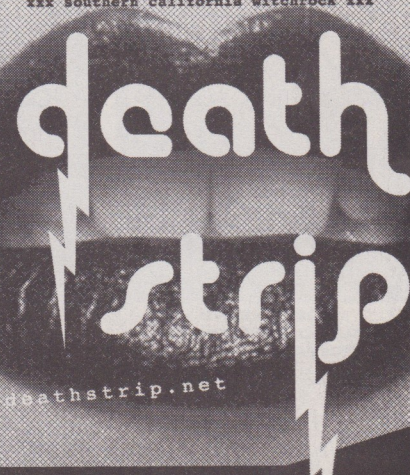



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detract anything from the genre.
—Jimmy Alvarado (Switchlight)

RAD: Loud & Fast: LP

A friend and I always have this conversation about how some fast and thrashy hardcore bands have that certain something that other bands of the genre lack. What do these bands have that the others don't? I'm listening to Rad, and sitting here trying to figure that out right now. A lot of bands play it fast, some are pretty good, a few are great, and good majority should just stay in the practice room. I would place Rad squarely on the "great" podium. How is it that a jaded and bitter guy such as I can be blown away by this record? I've heard a million (okay I'm exaggerating, but you get the point) bands like this. I have a wall of records of this stuff located right behind me, and this record will be added to that collection at some point when I feel like it's time to file it away for a while. Whatever the case, this record rips. I hear hints of early DC hardcore like Minor Threat (guitar) and Void (the urgency of the vocals) in here, but, at the same time, these guys are not a clone and the influences are not wholesale rip offs. Maybe that's the secret? Play your music with conviction and that will come through. They tear into one song after the other, and each song is able to differentiate itself from the other in order to not sound like one long blur (another key ingredient to being at the top of the heap). Songs like "Creep-out Crew," "Corporate Drugs," "This Is Not Final

War," "I'm an Adult," and "You're Next" (about D&D) are the stand outs amongst a very solid record. —M.Avrq (Sacramento, sacramaniacs.com)

RECORDETTES, THE: Self-titled: 7" EP

Kitschy kung-fu pop, heavy on the candy-colored polka dots and all-day suckers. "Candy Store" is the obvious signature tune here; probably not delightful enough to surpass "Candygirl" by Candygirl as the world's foremost Candy Anthem, but more than delicious enough to make you forget if you ever knew what flavor the clear-colored Haribo® Gummi Bears are ((i'll give you a hint: Rhymes with "pineapple")). "Shower Request" is a kooky instrumental, and "John Waters, Can You Please Be My Father" probably kinda sounds just like you think it does. *On to the malt shop! No simple carbohydrates are safe!* BEST SONG: "Candy Store." BEST SONG TITLE: "John Waters, Can You Please Be My Father?" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Comes in a paper sleeve version with multicolored dots on a black background, and a plastic sleeve version, with bright blue dots on a clear background! No peanut, however. —Rev. Nørb (No Front Teeth, therecordettes.bandcamp.com)

REGRET, THE INFORMER:

Less than Three: 7" EP

Arty, self-absorbed, emo-indie stuff with lyrics like, "She listened to the Smiths and said I looked like Kurt Cobain/Dressed up in your celebrity

skin/You would be my Courtney/Love was a drug pulling us apart." Snoozeville. —Jimmy Alvarado (Stink Cat, facebook.com/StinkCatRecords)

RHUBARBS: If We Build It,

You Will Come: LP

Bar punk with no edge. Zeke on downers. Nine Pound Hammer sans testicles. —Juan Espinosa (Wasted Wax, rhubarbs780@gmail.com)

ROSE PHANTOM, THE: Abandon: CD

Gloomy Gus rock music with synths and other instruments used in all sorts of heinous and horrifying ways. —Jimmy Alvarado (The Rose Phantom, therosephantom.com)

RUNS, THE: Pretty Girls: 7"

Four cuts of Ramones-influenced rock. The music is fast and the singer gets into Joey territory occasionally. No one song stands out, but it holds my interest for the length of the record. It's catchy more often than not. —Billups Allen (Reach Around)

RUST BELT DEMONS:

Never Mind the Singles, Here's the Flexi Babies: Flexidisc

This is some great mid-tempo punk rock in the vein of The Beltones or The Randumbs. Rough around the edges in all the right ways. I like it! What I'm generally not a fan of is flexidiscs, but since the tunes are good and they made a nice, slick 7" sleeve for it, I'll let it slide... This time. —Ty Stranglehold (Sexy Baby)

SCIENCE POLICE: You Are Under Arrest in the Future: 7" EP

Sounds like a somewhat less-glossy version of the Yum Yums trying to sound like a somewhat less-glossy version of Manplanet or a somewhat more-glossy version of the Kung Fu Monkeys. BUT FROM THE FUTURE. On my planet, this is considered an endorsement, but bear in mind we also use pudding as currency there, so adjust accordingly. BEST SONG: "The Boat Dreams from the Front Desk." BEST SONG TITLE: "She Blinded Me with Immunobiology." FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: "Everyone in the Science Police is a real police officer and a real scientist. We would like to thank all of you for your efforts. Everything will probably be ok." —Rev. Nørb (Bloated Kat)

SECTOR ZERO: "Guitar Attack" b/w "Hiding in My Car": 7"

One of the many offshoots of Jay Reatard and Eric Oblivian (together and in their respective bodies of work). Rumor has it they played only like two shows. I don't know if they have any other songs in the can. Memphis has the kind of town/scene/what-have-you band mix, match, and swap that simultaneously inspires me and bums me out. It's inspiring because any group of friends should be able to get together to make some music; I'm bummed because I have so much trouble doing it within my own town. The record sounds like a Reatard/Oblivian/Goner record, which means it's good. Guitar attack, indeed! —Sal Lucci (Goner)

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SED NON SATIDTA: Self-titled: LP

Loud, heavy, and emotional. Some might call it screamo. It's excellently crafted, with its peaks and troughs riding on wonderfully plotted graph of intensity. The light moments feel anxious, waiting for their moment to pounce just when the tension builds to a crescendo. Trying to make heads or tails out of the packaging is a bit of a puzzler though. Where the music makes a logical statement, the artwork is full of blurry, run together, monochromatic visuals. Even the band's name is hard to read. For a visual representation of the music, these images visualize a chaotic, but controlled mess. All in all, it's a metaphor I can endorse and music I can headbang to. —Bryan Static (Echo Canyon/Adagio830/Protagonist)

SHAKES, THE: Full House: 7"

Kinda goofy, kinda rocking garage punk with elements of soul and doo wop in the backing vocals. Fans of Burger Records or Shannon And The Clams would probably find a whole lot to like from this Philadelphia band. —Mike Frame (Self-released, facebook.com/theshakesrule)

SHELLSHAG: Forever: LP

It's difficult to write love letters to the one you love. It's even more difficult to write love letters to everyone you love in your life (some of whom you may not have met yet) and not have it come off as cornball shit, but as a personal, collective expression. Shellshag's components

are two great folks: Shell and Shag. Ancient black and white symbols, peanut butter cups, dots and dashes—they all become whole from slightly disparate, complementary components; they grow in meaning from context. Shellshag are also brilliant—in the bright, shining, colorful sense. Too much of one ingredient and, it'd be schmaltz or over-saturating blindness. Bells strapped to other legs could be a problem—inauthentic, gimmicky. But what you get on *Forever* are two independent musicians playing beautiful music to one another, and by extension, anyone else who's willing to listen. When people say "indie rock," this is what I wish they were talking about. Shellshag. Adventurous art without pretence, welcoming, oozing with fun, played with candor, grit, and amplification. —Todd Taylor (Don Giovanni)

SHELL SHAG / APOGEE SOUND CLUB: Lifestyle Obsession: Split 7" EP

Shell Shag: Things start off on a dissonant note with "Why the Fuck You Looking at Me," then get a bit more conventional indie-punk, though more minimalist in structure and execution than most others, on the remaining two tracks. Pretty sure this is a two-person lineup, but you don't really notice, which says volumes about the effectiveness of their delivery. Apogee Sound Club: Opens up with what sounds like a full band banging out a dissonant instrumental, followed by a

wiry, angular tune named "Hungover Again," then closes out with another short instrumental comprised of someone playing a kalimba over some synth noises. Nice split here. —Jimmy Alvarado (Thrillhouse)

SHIRKS: Self-titled: LP

What's great about labels like Grave Mistake or Deranged is that they blur the lines between punk, garage, hardcore and everything in between, so all the kids (unbeknownst to them) can't get themselves pigeonholed. If this band were on a label like Big Neck or Rip Off, they would be languishing in bars frequented by dudes whose favorite band is Johnny Thunders. Along with bands like the Shitty Limits or Henry Fiats Open Sore, the Shirks bring hardcore into their garage punk. For sure, they remind me of bands like the Problematics or the Stipjes from the early days of Rip Off Records, but these D.C boys have clearly spent some time with the Teen Idles and S.O.A. This is fucking killer. —Tim Brooks (Grave Mistake, gravemistakerecords.com)

SICKOIDS: No Home: 12" EP

Sickoids play charred, straight-forward USHC punk. Gloomy, blackened, and burnt, but direct nonetheless. *No Home* makes Government Warnings' *No Moderation* sound like youthful indulgence. Horridly anguished music for those who can't not be at war with society 'cause the battleground starts before you even open your front door. —Daryl (Grave Mistake / Sorry State)


SLAVES: Sugar Coated Bitter Truth: CD
Noisy post-punk from this U.K. band with absolutely no information about anything in the artwork. Gauging by the amount of this stuff that comes in for review, it is starting to feel a lot like the Fat Wreck clone glut in the mid to late '90s. Perhaps it only feels that way because they are both styles that I don't care for and have a hard time coming up with something to say. This is post-punk type stuff with shouted vocals. It is kind of dancey and angular and stuff. —Mike Frame (Boss Tuneage)

SLEAZE, THE:**Tecktonik Girlz and Other Hits: LP**


Total Punk seems to be one of those labels you can trust. At least from my limited experience, anytime my old and feeble hands have held a TP record, it gave me a sense that this was something I could take home, spend some time with, and nothing weird would happen—like waking up in the morning with a pounding headache, sore jaw, and your pants around your ankles. Just as the name of the band hints at, the sound on here is sleazy, with a raw and buzzing guitar that cuts through the air with the intent of piercing your eardrums. The vocals are on the same level, with a snotty, nasally persona. When the guitars and vocals meet in the middle at times, the sound gets abrasive. The rhythms are bouncy (in a good way—not that "mall punk, meh" dreck sort way) and tough all at the same time. Songs like "Too Close Home," "Live Wire" (kind of like a

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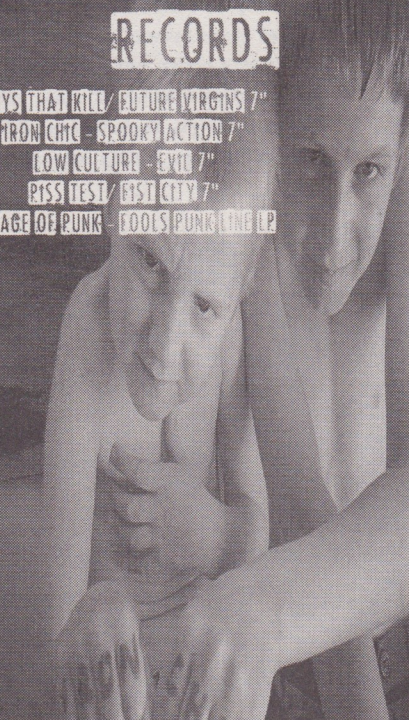


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pumped up/punked up Warsaw)," and "Conor Start" will have you believing that there is still more mileage left on this whole punk rock thing yet. If these guys were not from Minnesota, I would have sworn they were some obscure gem from Australia. I call that high praise. Only five hundred pressed up. Get one or two. -M.AvrG (Total Punk, floridaisdying.com)

SMOOTH BRAIN: *Fleas: 7"*

There are a few moments where Smooth Brain sound like they're covering a Cleveland Bound Death Sentence song—that same kind of grit and scrappiness, though Smooth Brain are slower and don't crackle with nearly the same kind of exuberance and energy. Not really my cup, as it were. -Keith Rosson (Lost Cat)

SOVIET VALVES:

Death Trumps Romance: 12" EP

Melodic, garagey rock that is a combination of sophisticated and rough. "A diamond in the rough," if you will. The songs are tuneful with bashing rhythms, where the guitars create a layer of distortion and jangly, pop-frantic note picking. "Throne" is a particularly driving number, where the riff pushes everything forward with a sort of gruffness, only to be cooled by the third verse that switches tempo, and lets everyone breathe. This is a more introspective kind of listening record, instead of one that bashes you over the skull with a mallet. You know, it is possible to rock out and have a

brain. Scientific fact. -M.AvrG (Vertex, vertexaudio@gmail.com)

SPOKENEST: *We Move: 12"*

I love bands that sound like they *have* to play because they have something to say or just have something inside that has to get out. A person who picks up a guitar while visiting your apartment and bashes out a song (not a solo/noodling or cover) fully formed that they just thought up at that moment and you started clapping or striking furniture to provide the beat... it's all heart and spirit. Not contrived acoustic or folk punk, but raw electric tunes that jump off the record and squeeze your heart and dig into your brain. Soul music for punks over forty and lighter fluid for the youngsters. I love GEG. I feel like I'm a member of Spokenest. "This record is for the 20 people in every town" indeed. Heavy rotation. -Matt Seward (Self-released)

STREET DOGS, THE:

Crooked Drunken Sons: 7" EP

As the band discusses side projects and takes a bit of a breather from non-stop touring, they are nice enough to give the fans a teaser of what is to come. More anthemic, driving punk rock with meaningful lyrics and thrilling guitar riffs. What more could you want? Maybe a cold one to go along with their cover of Uncle Tupelo's "I Got Drunk" (I'm sure Jeff Tweedy is proud). Crank this one loud and you're set. -Sean Koepenick (Pirates Press, piratepressrecords.com)

STREET DOGS, THE: *Rustbelt Nation: 7" EP*

As we wait patiently for the promised live DVD, the band tosses a few new nuggets out to keep the wolves at bay. Singer Mike McColgan stirs our patriotism from the onset of the title track. The other two songs are vintage punk rock sing-a-longs. I'll take this as the band gets back on solid ground with the addition of Lenny Lashley (ex-Darkbuster) on guitar. Expect greatness. -Sean Koepenick (Pirate Press, piratepressrecords.com)

SUMMER VACATION / HARD GIRLS:

Split: 7"

Summer Vacation: The bits of Weezer I really like meets Rites Of Spring's entire brief catalog. Shattered, pretty, monstrous, calming, and epic from one second to the next without any herky-jerkiness or multiple personality disorder. Know what can kill hardcore? Ladies can rarely share equally in the celebration—half of the world's population excluded from the party. Not so with Summer Vacation. It feels inclusive. Hummingbird pinpoint swiftness. Elephant stomp. Hard Girls: One long-form song that evokes the late '90s where both punk and post-punk—as labels—were approached with extreme caution (and rarely invoked), college radio was losing its arm wrestling contest to "indie rock," (later to be shorn to "indie") and bands like Chokebore, Gaunt, and The Yummy Fur convinced their respective towns of Cleveland, Honolulu, and

Glasgow that they were next heir apparents. Nice split. -Todd Taylor (Recess / Asian Man)

SUNDOWNERS:

The Larger Half of Wisdom: LP

Band maturation is an interesting journey. I'm not going to say *Gnomes and Glaciers* was a good album. It was fair, but didn't get you caught up from the get go, nor did it slow burn its way into heavy rotation. The 7" was a huge leap forward; songs sticking immediately in your head, warranting the getting up and down to flip the record for multiple spins. That can happen a lot with the no-filler shorter format. *The Larger Half of Wisdom* is obviously the fruition of the direction headed and the time elapsed between releases. The new LP is quite simply a stunner and not just because each song is immediately hummable. The embellishments that add the extra little "umf" or "whoah!" throughout the album (the small guitar flourish in "Blue Collar Salute," the slide guitar-esque solo in "Right Down Broadway," and the high backing vocals in "Bird World Problems") bring that little where-did-that-come-from? shiver up your spine. The loose theme of the record and fantastic art and layout ice this cake and are going to speak volumes if you're big into hugging trees and petting animals. Sundowners have offered up a top 10 for 2013... easy. -Matt Seward (Dirt Cult)

SUSPECT: *Self-titled: Cassette*

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members of Tear It Up, Find Him And Kill Him, Deep Sleep, Knife Fight, and Kent State. There are six tracks on this cassette. From the first to the last track, every song rips! Great riffs showcasing tight technical playing and crisp drumming are the highlights on this, including blazing leads in the tracks "Tyranny of the Desert" and "The First Day." I've been listening to this constantly since it came into my hands, and I still can't get enough. Highly recommended. -Paul J. Comeau (Paranoid Futures, paranoidfutures.blogspot.com, paranoidfutures666@gmail.com)

TEE PEES, THEE: *Bitchin' Titties: 7" EP*

If you're on the hunt for conclusive evidence of society's collapse, you need look no further than the Tee Pees. These eastside trashmongers return with another EP's worth of sleaze and '60s skronk to soil your soul and defile your eardrums. The cleaner production this time 'round adds a bit more punch, and "punk," perennial screeching organ notwithstanding, to tunes about amorous robots, preferential sororius pecking orders in reference to potential mating opportunities, and the titular subject matter, most of which are all but guaranteed to piss off someone within earshot. Limited to three hundred copies, with the first hundred on "white man's blood red vinyl," so you'd best get to hunting before, to paraphrase some dead hippie, "the whole shithouse goes up in flames." -Jimmy Alvarado (Manglor, manglorrecords.com)

TEENAGE STRANGE: *"Eerie Energy" b/w "Zeitgeist": 7"*

Nowhere near as Teenagers-From-Mars-y as one'd expect from the band name and glow-in-the-dark vinyl, the Strange trade in outsider metally riff-rock, kind of like if Zeke slowed down, turned up the distortion, and made a song out of that one riff from "Therapy" off the Damned's *Black Album*. If i correctly remember what Chrome sounded like the last time i heard them ((which was about twenty-five years ago)), this might sound like that. The b-side is 5:52 long and proportionately less titillating. Hey, i'll have what the five-eyed monster on the cover is having! BEST SONG: "Eerie Energy." BEST SONG TITLE: "Eerie Energy." FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Cover sticker trumpets the use of "GLOW 'N THE DARK VINYL," but i can't find any of this dark vinyl they mention. -Rev. Nørð (Gloryhole, gloryholerecords.com)

THIS ROUTINE IS HELL: *Howl: CD*

Stompy, howly hardcore of the ilk often favored by burly men with a predilection for lotsa tattoos, wallet chains, facial hair, and long shorts. -Jimmy Alvarado (Shield)

TRAUMA: *10 Song: EP*

Expectations were off the charts for this record. Were they met? Hell yes! They were surpassed. Members of Deathreap, Final Warning, Tragedy, and Long Knife recorded this way back in 2008, released it as a demo, and then finally pressed it onto vinyl. Thank the lard! This record

rages. It's like hearing the first Deathreap EP for the first time. A situation of "Holy fuck! Where has this record been all my life?!" Blazing hardcore from beginning to end. Were you expecting less? You can hear their past bands blended smoothly into the mix, and they don't sound like anyone in particular. Just loud and manic. I crank the opening bass dive bombs to "See You Fall" every time. It gives the song that extra punch. Then there are the thundering tracks like "No Hope No More" and "Era of Excess." Then you get a song like "End of the World" with the guitar that gives the song a different texture amongst all the distortion and crushing percussion. The closer, "Utopia," is the sound of the world coming undone. -M.Avrø (Bulkhead, bulkheadrecords.com)

TRUE SONS OF THUNDER:

Black Astrologers: 7"

Pretty cool garage punk with psych overtones from this Memphis band. Features Eric from the Oblivians and members of the Oscars and Rat Traps. Folks who are big on the collective output of those bands will find a whole lot to like here. -Mike Frame (Goner)

TV FREAKS: Self-titled: LP

Raging punk rock from these guys. Reminds me a little of the Oops, because they're at a point where they're straddling hardcore in some songs. They hit these quick speeds that tip into the red, and I'm "huzzah huzzah" like. But for the most part, they keep it at a mid tempo swagger. The vocals are akin to snot-nosed know-

it-all teenager backed up by a wound-up band, and the whole sound is convincing. The photo of the band on the lyric sheet looks like a group nice kids, and not a bunch of miscreants, as the music would have you thinking. You get songs that thrash and bash, a vocalist who shouts at you and sounds like he's daring you to take a swing (especially in the song "Finish What You Started"), and buzzy distorted guitars. Pretty good record. One of my favorites this issue. -M.Avrø (Schizophrenic, schizophrenicrex.com)

TYRED EYES: *Ghost: 7"*

Sweden's answer to Drunken Boat with a raspy, twangy country feel to it. Whiskey & Co. mashed up with Masshysteri. This is guitar rock for punks. It's got a big, full sound to it, as well as pretty impressed packaging. Seven inch jacket with a printed spine? Cool. -Daryl (Gaphals / Alien Snatch, gaphals666@gmail.com)

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD TO CANDYLAND, THE / MEAN JEANS: *Split: 7"*

URTC: At the front of the house, URTC's a full-blown shake-up, get-down party with animals and happy American Indians and suchlike. What a booty-shakin' great time. The lyrics can be pretty dam sad, though. Dead birds. Square balls. Confusion. Insecurity. Losing a place to live. And I like that. People/animals/characters absolutely losing their furry shit to some substantive stuff. Thanks, punk rock. Few other genres can pull that off

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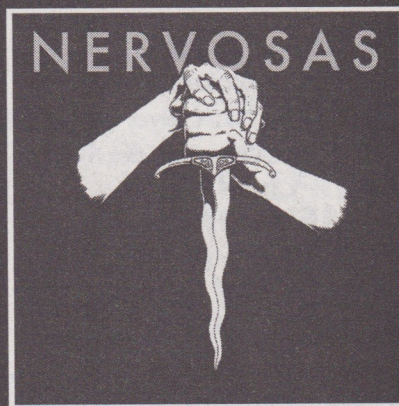
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without something in the chain being hypocritical. Mean Jeans: My vote's for somehow using the *Back to the Future* technology that should already exist and set the clock 1985, get on the set of *Weird Science* and convince John Hughes, that on Gary and Wyatt's road to becoming accepted, when they encounter many hilarious obstacles, that "Possessed 2 Party" is playing during one of them. Perhaps a Ferrari scene. I'll leave it up to the pros. That'd be perfect. "Terminally Twisted" is super-duper close to Queens clone territory. That's a planet with a lot of gravitational pull, a planet of whoa-oh-whoa-ohing zombies. I hope they use their Ramones thrusters to blast back into the Billie Ocean nebula and away from that risky business. —Todd Taylor (It's Alive)

UZI RASH: Coreless Roll Can-Liner: LP

I believe this band's been around a spell, but this is the first time I've come across 'em. They specialize in a brand of noisemaking that seems to be aimed at those whose extracurricular activities involve modified sugar cubes and pieces of paper that have been renamed "blotter" and "microdot." Like some unholy Beefheart-Los Angeles Free Music Society jam-band alliance from hell, they drop one tune after the next of lysergic-soaked racket, bouncing from acoustic, vaguely country western-tinged electric slide blues tunes to stuff that'd make the Butthole Surfers tilt their head sideways in wonder. Probably not for everyone, I reckon, but I'm diggin' the hell outta it. —Jimmy Alvarado (1-2-3-4 Go!)

VIGILANTES, LOS: Me Siento Azul: 7" EP

Designated Dale hepped me that these cats were interesting and, as per usual, he wasn't whistling Dixie. Different eras of rock'n'roll being mined here: opening salvo is a bit o' punk rock doo wop, the closer could've come outta some Latino interpretation of a Japanese "Beach Party" rip-off flick, and the tune caught in the middle goes for straight-up, tried and true punk ruckus. Totally not what I was expecting from this, but it's nonetheless wholly recommended. —Jimmy Alvarado (Slovenly)

WET LUNGS: Self-titled: 7" EP

An atonal battering of songs that often never break the one-minute mark, yet make the most of their short run time by cramming in as many tempo and signature changes as will fit. The singer sounds like he takes his cues from Dr. Teeth & the Electric Mayhem's legendary drummer Animal, and that's by no means an insult. —Jimmy Alvarado (Twistworthy)

WORLD/INFERNO FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY, THE:

Turnstile Comix #2: 7" EP

Punks rejoice! Here are your two favorite mediums working together in eye-watering beauty. Cutting out the middle man, Silver Sprocket combo packs comics and tunes, taking off on cartoonist Mitch Clem's idea to take bands' tales from the road and translate them into ink and watercolor; tack on a 7" slab o' wax by said band, and you've got yourself Turnstile Comix.

In the latest issue, the orchestral jazz punks, The World/Inferno Friendship Society, who have as many members as their name is long, get into a brawl in the middle of their set with an unnamed straight edge band and thwart an ironic defamation campaign. This gets even more chuckles when taking into account that TWIFS look like a bunch of squares. Dressed as if coming home from the office, Jack Terricloth and fellow coworkers are suited up in smart haircuts and shiny, snappy shoes. While the band's lineup in the comic sports a full saxophone ensemble, the roster of mates has since tapered down. After some shuffling, the seven current members featured on the record still stick to the cabaret jazz punk formula with violin, alto sax, and piano to round out the standard bass, guitar, drums, vocalist norm. Layering sounds like a klezmer band, they skootch and squeeze until each member and their appliance has their time to shine. A hint of clean piano keys can be eeked out in "The Faster You Go The Better You Think," amidst the violin bridge and alto sax line, while "Pickles and Gin" leans into bar room pomp and sway reminiscent of an '80s boozy Tom Waits. —Kristen K. (Silver Sprocket Bicycle Club)

WORTHWHILE WAY: Love Is All: CD

I missed Worthwhile Way at AwesomeFest last year. Upon hearing this, I'm sad about it almost a year later. Fun, easygoing, feel-good punk. The singer's voice kind of reminds me of

Roxy Epoxy a bit. The music is bouncy and catchy and I find myself smiling a lot when I listen to it. If I ever get the chance to see them again, I won't miss out. —Ty Stranglehold (A.D.D.)

ZERO BOYS: Pro Dirt: 7" EP

Holy sausage Batman! A new Zero Boys record and a tour, to boot! Hot damn! Fast and loose is the order of the day here. It serves the band well on songs such as "Monkey Meat" and the title track. The anger and speed are still in full effect. Be glad that the band is back among the living. —Sean Koepenick (1-2-3-4-Go!)

ZIG ZAGS: 10-12: Cassette

This hand-numbered cassette features their out-of-print *Scavenger 7"*, a bunch of unreleased studio songs, their first demo *Party at Dave's House*, and the *Monster Wizard 7"*. Going from skate punk to psychedelic trip outs and back to punk and post punk makes for a disjointed listen—kind of like a weird mixed cassette that your friend made for you. The band is actually quite talented and has the ability to play all those styles well. A pretty cool collection of their music and definitely a cool cassette. —Rick Ecker (Burger)

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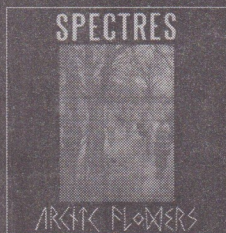
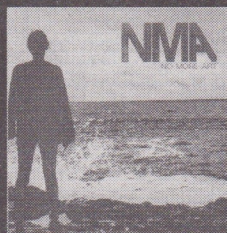
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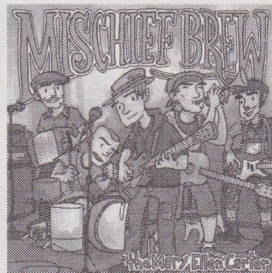


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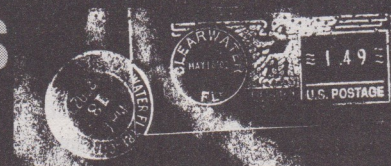
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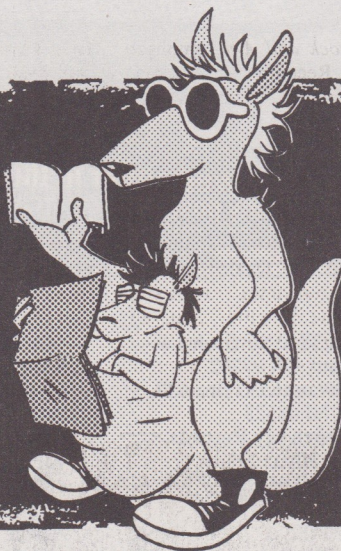
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"How not to be
offended? There's a full
page ad of a topless
woman, electrical tape
over her nipples in a
vending machine."

—Todd Taylor
NEW NOISE #2

BURN IT, \$5.00, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2",
handmade, 18 pgs.

Burn It is handmade! I think this is the first handmade zine I've ever seen. All the text is hand-written, the pages are made from glued-together graph paper, paper bags and maps of the Bay Area, and includes glossy photos of various vignettes. Most of the pictures have a hand-written caption of pithy maxims. The pictures are interesting and the amount of work that goes into this is incredible. —Steve Hart (Brendy Muninger, 1716 Santa Clara Ave., Alameda, CA 94501)

EXPLODING BUFFALO Vol. 1, Issue IV, 4 1/2" x 8 1/2", photocopied, 39 pgs. I thoroughly enjoyed the previous "Drugs" themed issue and was looking forward to "Alienation." Perhaps since alienation's such an existential topic that the cracks really show, but the writing in this issue is, overall, much more uneven and forced. I did, however, enjoy Vladimir Santos's "Alienation of the Mind," an illustrated exploration on the role of American-based inhumane torture shattering a man's humanity. But stuff like the narrator in Jonathan T. Sheppard's short story who opines "I bet her pussy still smells so sweet" and "He's probably an in-the-closet faggot," when learning his ex-girlfriend is dating a fashion designer who cooks, made me question who's ultimately alienating who in this collaborative zine. —Todd Taylor (explodingbuffalo.com)

FLUKE #11, \$4.00,
5 1/2" x 8 1/2", offset, 40 pgs.
Fluke has been publishing for twenty-two years and has really hit its stride with issue 11. This issue includes interviews with Michigan heroes, Negative Approach, and Ed Crawford (firehose), along with Bad Years, Barker Gee, Neon Piss, and Wet Spots. I love reading any interview with the firehose/Minutemen crew. They are always inspirational and interesting. However, the real gem

in *Fluke* #11 is the article on buZ Blurr, a traveler and artist who worked on the railroad for forty-one years and is known famously behind the Colossus of Roads moniker. The filmmaker, Bill Daniel, (*Who is Bozo Texino?*) who also writes, *Mostly True* (which I reviewed in the previous issue of *Razorcake*) is featured as well and talks about his relationship with buZ. This is a must-read issue and well-worth four dollars. —Steve Hart (Fluke Fanzine, PO Box 1547, Phoenix, AZ 85001 flukezine@gmail.com)

INSTANT REGRET #1, \$2,
4 1/4" x 5 1/2", photocopied, 30 pgs. The first issue of *Instant Regret* was created as a challenge by the author to himself. His constant indecision had kept him from putting out a zine before now, in his late twenties. While he had talked about it, he finally decided to do it. And I congratulate him on it, as not only is it a great feeling to produce and publish a zine, but also for getting over his indecision, as well as sending it out to be reviewed. That's not easy, so kudos to him. The content of the zine focuses on his education in zines, wanting to move to Portland, Oregon, and his depression, amongst other things. I read this pretty quickly and really wished it was longer, as I found the writing to be well done, his story to be interesting, and could certainly relate to the indecision and depression. I'd definitely be interested in reading a second issue that focused more on the author's experiences and his attempts at trying to overcome them (especially if he succeeds). —Kurt Morris (instantregretzine@gmail.com)

KYEO SPEAKS #6, \$?,
5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied, 40 pgs. Half-sized music fanzine leaning towards screamo from unlikely places such as Normal, Illinois and Edmonton, Alberta (or does an "unlikely" place make screamo more

likely?), as well as reviews, tour journals, and an internet message board/email beef about Top Shelf records reprinted in full. I like that the band interviews focus on the specific character of the places the bands are from, although the interviews often go into uninteresting territory because the questions become specifically referential to uninteresting aspects of the band's friendship with the interviewer. Aside from that, I think everything here is spot on. Interviewing/reading interviews is hard—I'm sure the (well-done) interview with Joseph McRedmond (of Hoover, Admiral, etc.) would be much more captivating for a big fan of his bands and music, but when I finished the interview I was just left wondering, "Why didn't they ask him more about working with adults with developmental disabilities?" This was my mode during reading most of *Kyeo Speaks*—wishing it was more "for me" but understanding that that's no mark against what it is. —Dave Brainwreck (kyeospeaks@gmail.com, kyeospeaks.com)

NEW NOISE #2, 8" x 10", color, glossy, 80 pgs., free
How not to be offended? The first cross-page spread advertises a band name on the left. On the right is a white page with small, centered Hot Topic, Target, Wal-Mart, Best Buy, and Warped Tour logos. That explains how this magazine is free. Predictably, there's that pay-to-play vibe of *Skritch*: a visual echo of the band promo shot used for an "interview" then used in an ad close to the "interview." (A publicist's wet dream.) There's no editorial. Their obituary page fails to mention who one of the two of the recently deceased men is. Typos run rampant. There's a full page ad of a topless woman, electrical tape over her nipples (and not in the warrior, shotgun, chainsaw, car-in-pool, fuck-you style of Wendy O. Williams), in a vending machine, hands pressed against the glass. How

far will you go to sell and get sold? Pretty fuckin' far, is *New Noise's* answer. I understand bills need to be paid, but at what price? Ads that don't stop at the objectification of women, but celebrate it? Count me out. From the ashes of *AMP* magazine. —Todd Taylor (PO Box 5915, Berkeley, CA 94705)

PSYCHO.MOTO ZINE #18 & 19,
Free, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2" 12 pgs.
Quirky fanzine that entertains without getting too heavy. Each issue features a different theme that a group of writers tackle from multiple angles (social, political, sexual, etc.). One issue featured articles on strippers (including DC bars of ill repute that I have never been in) and the other featured pieces on zombies. You can probably guess which issue may get repeat reads in my casa. A different guest artist also spices things up each issue. Cool and edgy all at once. —Sean Koepenick (Minsker & Lee Productions LLC 126 East 12th St., Suite 3C, NY, NY 10003)

RIOT 77 #16, €3, 8 1/2" x 11",
offset, 48 pgs.
Fairly run-of-the-mill glossy punk fanzine from Ireland. By the looks of this issue, they're concerned with heavyweights of yore that are still out there pounding something: interviews are with Eric Davidson of the New Bomb Turks, Handsome Dick Manitoba of the Dictators, and T.S.O.L., among others. The writing and interviews are pretty strong, with noticeable weak spots (as in almost every glossy I've come across—maybe it stands out more when it's this slickly produced?). I'm weird about this stuff. For example: I love Rancid, and I'm not ashamed to love them, even though they're irrelevant dinosaurs, and so I don't mind that a show reviewer in this is getting stoked on a Rancid show (like I was this time last year, front and center). But when they say that *Let the Dominoes Fall* is Rancid's strongest record since ...*And Out Come the*

Wolves (which is fucking ludicrous and ignorant), I snap out of my reading-trance and this irreconcilable, essential difference between me and the magazine starts to form, and suddenly the advertisements and slippery pages start to feel dirty and wrong, and I start to hate everything in it and write it off completely, like they're talking about "punk" the way an alien might talk to me about "home," until I realize that all this is just stemming from our different opinions on *Rancid* of all things and I take a deep breath and

issue of *Shock and Awe*, amongst much more. Recommended. —Dave Brainwreck (shockawemedia.wordpress.com)

SHOCK & AWE #6, \$3 + postage, 11" x 8", offset, 72 pgs.

I really can't overstate how awesome this zine is. Phenomenal. Following the tried and true fanzine formula (columns, interviews, reviews), *Shock and Awe* is a truly inspiring endeavor that showcases just how amazingly active the punk scene is in Malaysia. The layout is incredible,

have a title. It means the album is self-titled, named after the band. For some reason, bands and artists who make albums don't have the privilege to make their albums untitled because everybody would assume they were self-titled. They can title them *Untitled* but they can't just leave them blank and expect everyone to assume that it's untitled and not self-titled. It just doesn't work that way. You can't refer to a self-titled album by calling it after its actual title. You have to say "the self-titled album." It would be too confusing to say you

for decades.) Do yourself a favor if you think you've seen all that zines have to offer, that the format's been blasted. Order a copy of *Us & Them*. It's worth well more than six bucks. Features on Culo, Big Crux, Nomos, and artist Mat Plezier. Highest recommendation possible. —Todd Taylor (ISO3200 Press, PO Box 25605, LA, CA 90025, iso3200press@gmail.com)

ZISK #22, 7" x 8 1/2", photocopied, 34 pgs., \$3
Not to paint with too big of a

"It's international, this lexicon we've built over the decades that tries to discern, musically or otherwise, what's worthwhile and worth knowing and worth lauding and what isn't."

—Keith Rosson | *SHOCK AND AWE* #5

admit that it's a decent magazine after all. —Dave Brainwreck (riot77magazine@hotmail.com)

SHOCK & AWE #5, \$?, 7" x 8 1/2", offset, 64 pgs.

Holy shit. This is awesome, and so completely comprehensive and well-done and dealing with stuff I have *no fucking clue* about, which is the Klang Valley (Malaysia) punk scene. But now I do! And what's more is that the more I read this, which has essays, a "brief" history of the Malaysian DIY hardcore scene from 1994-1997, columns, band interviews, record label/distro interviews, record reviews (contributors chose their top five Klang Valley releases of the past decade), the more I realized that I did have a clue about this after all. Not that I'd heard any of these bands before, or knew anything specific about the Klang Valley punk scene (beyond figuring that one existed), but in being given such a huge document of a completely separate, and in many ways distinct from my own, punk scene, I recognized much common ground—watching a venue (Rumah Api) be built from the ground up and become a keystone of a scene, even as it (or especially as it) changes and evolves, figuring out how to ethically and sensibly run your band or label, and most importantly, being clearly drawn to punk because you're disgusted with so much about the society you exist in. These are things I know, live, and think about all the time. Same with the people behind and inside this

the photos are excellent, the effort is more than apparent. Bands interviewed include Milisi Keco, Snaggletooth, Angkara, and a look back at the '80s-'90s Manila band Dead Ends. A columnist or two try to push the "obnoxious" button a bit, but whatever—the rest of *Shock and Awe* more than compensates. The columnists talk about what we've talked about for decades: *punk stuff*. It's international, this lexicon we've built over the decades that tries to discern, musically or otherwise, what's worthwhile and worth knowing and worth lauding and what isn't. This is a great fanzine, and I hope they keep it up. *Shock And Awe* is distro'd by quite a few places throughout the world, so I'd say those of us in the U.S. should hit up a distro like Feral Ward to get a copy. A truly inspiring effort. —Keith Rosson (*Shock & Awe* c/o W. Allaudin, PO Box 10394, Kuala Lumpur, 50712, Malaysia)

UNTITLED, 8 1/2" x 5 1/2", 10 pgs., photocopied.

Untitled isn't really titled *Untitled*—there's actually no title on it. Or is that what being untitled is? Because when a poem is untitled that's often the title: *Untitled*. I mean, it's often written on the top (to make a point of it being untitled). In that case, I don't think it's really untitled but instead, titled *Untitled*. It's printed on there for the effect, as if to say, "I didn't title this poem, think about it"—otherwise, they would just leave it blank, untitled. When an album doesn't show a title, it doesn't mean that the album doesn't

were listening to, say, Metallica's self-titled album by saying, "I've been listen listening to *Metallica*." If you did that, it certainly wouldn't be unheard of to have someone say, "Oh yeah, which album?" Nor could you say, "I've been listening to Peter Gabriel's *Peter Gabriel*," because that would be redundant and nobody wants that. Of course, Peter Gabriel is a bad example because he's had several self-titled albums, so if you were to say that you've been listening to Peter Gabriel's self-titled album, you might, again, be asked, "Oh yeah, which one?" But that's neither here nor there. So what if you wrote a pretentious, pseudo-intellectual short story, put it in zine form, and released it without a title, leaving a blank cover and your name and a bio on the back? Would that be a self-titled zine or an untitled zine? —Craven Rock (amorreal22@gmail.com)

US & THEM #2, 11" x 17",

Silk-screened cover, photocopied, 18 pgs., \$6
Read that description again. 11" x 17", silk-screened badass broadside goodness. This zine is massive, the photos are gigantic, the layout crisp, and the interviews top notch. (In the U.X. Vileheads interview, I learned that Sweden had a forced sterilization program based on the principles of eugenics until the mid-'70s. Fuckin' nuts.) Matt Average has pushed both the art and craft of zines to an elevated level. (This is the best case scenario of what can happen when you've been doing what you love

brush, but Zisk's staff is populated by nerds who love baseball. I say that respectfully. The other scenarios—jocks who love baseball or dickheads who use sports fandom as a vehicle for abuse—have the bigger microphones and get more attention. But that's where punk rock and zines come in and make things non-shitty. *Zisk* provides a safe zone to talk about baseball, even if you don't follow it too closely. It's in this non-commercial, fan-driven safety pocket that Nørb can cover decade's worth of lower case, Bicameral Case, and ALL CAPS font usage on baseball cards. (I never saw the MB in the mitt of the Milwaukee Brewer's logo before Nørb pointed it out.) *Zisk* is also decidedly from the fans' perspectives, not googley-eyed over fame. Regular folks with regular lives who like to watch a small white ball get whacked around share stories about taking a friend of an opposing team to a hometown game. A father takes his ten-year-old (who knows far more than he about the Oakland A's) and gets heckled in Texas. Joe Evans III discovers the joy of minor league baseball (and I'm still in disbelief they cannoned out quesadillas wrapped inside of T-shirts as a promotion). Peppered with great detail, recounted with a quiet casualness, I always look forward to a new issue of *Zisk*. —Todd Taylor (PO Box 469, Patterson, NY 12563)



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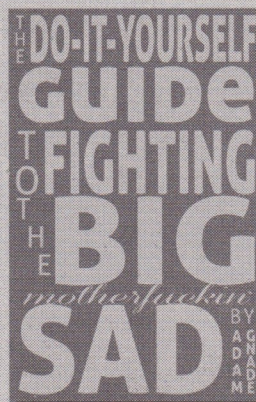
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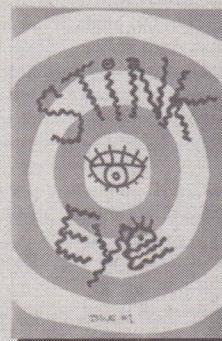
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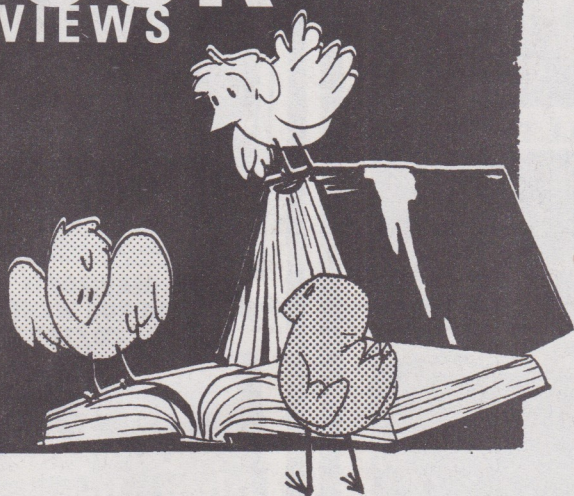


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BOOK REVIEWS



After-Life Story of Pork Knuckles Malone, The

By MP Johnson, 93 pgs.

A squirmy, oozing green horror story about a wayward porker with dark, eldritch powers is a story right in my wheelhouse. As it turns out, my dad was a professor of veterinary pathobiology and as a kid my tender brain meat was forever scorched with the image of a one-eyed pig head that used to sit in a jar of cloudy sick-green fluid on a shelf in his office. So I'm

upchucks ranging from rabid roid-rage drag queens to avuncular crust punks and white trashers.

And that's just a thumbnail sketch, at best.

With the rapidly and surrealistically shifting storyline and the even more rapidly transmogrifying characters, one can easily picture author MP Johnson as a young buck weaned on harrowing amounts of sucrose-painted marshmallow sweetie bits cereal and countless seizure-inducing episodes of *He-Man: Master of the Universe*. And maybe a little *Pee-Wee's Playhouse*, to boot.

With a pig-tail twisted book like this, the list of potential influences that one can imagine straddles both the mainstream and the transgressive.

Along with a high sugar diet and strange children's TV shows, there are possible contemporary forbears from the world of literature as well. Picture the jarring imagery of people like Chuck Palahniuk, Bret Easton Ellis and/or Kathy Acker, combined with the colloquial ham-and-eggs tone of authors like Jim Thompson and Jack Black (author of *You Can't Win*.) The combination creates a strange brew indeed, one almost Alfred Jarry-like in its absinthic absurdism.

But enough guessing about MP's possible influences. That kind of conjecture is symptomatic of critic's disease. Just like how a symptom of GG Allin's lyme disease was his proclivity for hurling his own bowel custard at audience members.

You could even say, I suppose, that *Pork Knuckles Malone* is the red-headed, oinkish grandkid of literary offerings along the lines of Bataille's *Story of the Eye* or William Burroughs's "talking asshole" bit from *Naked Lunch*. Just toss in some over-the-top, bath salts-fueled, Rob Zombie-esque movie violence and you're approaching a realm where avenging oozing-green hams can take possession of people, travel through deep space and eventually become a Hamgawd on a planet called "Porknuckas."

And happily, this is the same realm where there exist things like misanthropic flies named Zzz who turn out to be Adolf Hitler transmigrated. (One of my favorite parts of the story.)

"When accused of preaching to the choir, Billy Bragg responded with something like, 'I'm not preaching to them, I'm giving them ammo.'"

—Jim Woster, *Anarchy! An Anthology of Emma Goldman's Mother Earth*

right at home in the realm of demented swine nightmares.

I am also a big fan of Pigasus, the hog that the Yippies ran for President in 1968, so I'm very comfortable with the notion of porcine apotheosis.

It should be pointed out from the outset that this particular novella was written by MP Johnson, a brethren of the *Razorcake* cabal, and that makes a review like this potentially tricky; one misstep and I could be accused of *Razorcake* nepotism and my sterling reputation as a journalist possessed of the finest cut of jib could be brought into question. The other potentially tricky aspect of my reviewing *The After-Life Story of Pork Knuckles Malone* is that there is a very real danger of cobbling together a review that's almost as long as the book itself.

Succinctly put, this story is a sort of an unwholesome twist on the beloved "a boy and his dog" tale, the classic oft-told storyline that has, at its heart, the bond between man and pet. Something along the lines of *Old Yeller*. But in this particular case, the pet is a pig named "Pork Knuckles" and, for the bristly bulk of the story, it's a postmortem pig in the commodified form of a honey-cured ham, with a certain consciousness and enflamed willpower still inexplicably intact. But the unpleasant transformation from happy, healthy pig to rancid ham seems to have left our hero in a multi-dimensionally foul mood that would rival the crankiest tantrums of Humwawa, the Lord of Abominations and All That Decays, whose breath is the stench of dung, and who is known as the most ill-tempered of all the dark denizens of the netherworlds. And so Pork Knuckles is propelled along on a Rambo-like path of destruction, taking down all those who did or would do him wrong.

The wretched truth of the axiom "hell hath no fury like a swine scorned" is then depicted in gut-wrenching detail as the vindictive ham zombie—wearing Rev. Nørb style deer antlers—metes out heaping pork-stinking helpings of ultra-violence on a cast of ne'er-do-wells and social

On the other hand, this might just be a cautionary tale about the potential dangers of the pet/pet-owner relationship, a near sacrosanct institution in this country and one swaddled in thoughts of cuddliness and the warm fuzzies. But as any eyeless, cheekless former chimp owner can attest to, it's a relationship that can viciously turn on you in two shakes of a primate's pituitary gland. Just ask Michael Jackson's original nose.

Anyone looking for morality lessons or deep philosophical insights in this book might be left "pig-biting mad," as *Weekly World News* columnist Ed Anger used to say. But people comfortable in the weird waters of things like *Adult Swim* will feel right at home, and will probably heartily enjoy the twisted tale that is *The After-Life of Pork Knuckles Malone*.

Personally, I found it to be a refreshing change of pace; having just finished reading Jack Grisham's paean to gluttonous sadism entitled *An American Douchebag*, wherein the reader is treated to a glorification of the Malignant Narcissist personality disorder, *Pork Knuckles* provided me with something more light-hearted and, by far, less postured.

While both fables can be said to be about hams and while G-ham's book wasn't without its interesting moments, if I'm going to invest my time in following the sadistic travails of a meathead bent on terrorizing every poor sap who crosses his path, I'll take the honey-cured ham over the malignant narcissist every time. —Aphid Peewit (Bizarro Pulp Press, bizarropulp.com)

Anarchy! An Anthology of Emma Goldman's Mother Earth

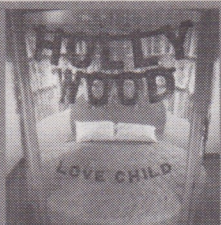
Edited by Peter Glassgold, 458 pgs.

Founded in 1906 by Emma Goldman, the magazine *Mother Earth* was designed to be, as *Anarchy!* editor Peter Glassgold writes, "a forum for anarchism of every school and variety. It appeared without interruption until August 1917, when it was killed by the wartime postal censorship and

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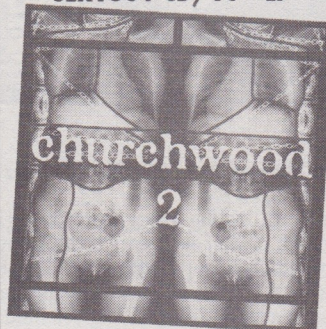
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succeeded by an abbreviated *Mother Earth Bulletin*, which lasted until April 1918.”

Anarchy! is an anthology of writing from *Mother Earth*, organized into six thematic sections: Anarchism, The Woman Question (the interpretations of feminism and suffrage are not favorable), Literature, Civil Liberties, The Social War (covering revolutions and labor strikes), and War And Peace.

The book is a documentary history, and documentary histories are probably the least thorough of histories. (Always excepting those ghost-written on behalf of talk radio hosts.) Do you know who Francisco Ferrer is? I didn't. After a paragraph explaining that he “introduced secular schools into Catholic Spain [and] was executed on October 13, 1909, on the patently false charge of fomenting a popular uprising in Barcelona,” we then read a Goldman screed written for an audience already intimately familiar with the Ferrer case.

Enjoyably, however (if, like me, you're into this), it's like reading a science fiction story that doesn't spend much time on exposition, leaving the reader to discern on her own the world of the story—this is especially true of the text of Peter Kropotkin's speech “The Sterilization of the

names—I find it too distracting. However, in *Fly*, some of the coolest Australian punk bands make an appearance. Vicious Circle, one of the bands featured on the *P.E.A.C.E.* compilation record, was popular with my group of friends and reading their name brought me back to that period of time. Depression, End Result, Gash, I Spit On Your Gravy, and X are also referenced. Incredibly real and full of vivid characters and personalities, *Fly* is the best book I've read this year. —Steve Hart (annwitherall.com)

High on Blood at the End of the World

By Joel Kaplan, 284 pgs.

High on Blood at the End of the World travels down some dark corridors, leaving no dirty room unexplored. Satanists, hypersexual teenage girls, serial killers, drug abusers, and incest-curious siblings tangle with each other in a novel of supernatural freakiness. Frank, the protagonist, is always up for adventure. Have some drugs? Don't know what they are? Don't know what they do? No problem for Frank. He'll take 'em. Need some dirty work done? Frank's got this one handled. Wanna have some freaky sex? Just ask Frank, he's up for it. The darkness of a small fucked-up town pervades every paragraph. It seeps onto the page like spilled oil.

“...if I, like Lewis three decades ago, could convince my parents to go with me to punk shows, then I can probably drag him out to see Creem or Dawn Of Humans sometime so he can start working on his official retraction.”

—Dave Brainwreck, *This Music: Pieces on Heavy Metal, Punk Rock, and Hardcore Punk*

Unfit,” which speech he delivered at the Eugenics Congress, which, yes, was an actual thing.

It's worth remembering as you read *Anarchy!* that *Mother Earth* was intended to be a forum, not an op-ed page, and that when Goldman writes, “Unfortunately it is only too true that the people in our so-called Democracy are to a large extent a dumb, suffering herd rather than thinking beings who dare to give expression to a frank, earnest opinion,” she likely was not trying to convince middle America's Babbitts of anything. When accused of preaching to the choir, Billy Bragg responded with something like, “I'm not preaching to them, I'm giving them ammo.”

Comedian Jackie Kashian writes on Twitter, “[I'm in] Texas looking at a bumper sticker that says ‘libertarian’ next to an ‘anarchist’ sticker. That is a man who is honest with himself.” *Anarchy!* reminds us that the differences between political ideologies are about as distinct as the differences between grindcore and metalcore. (Sorry if that sentence fills you with rage.) Do you have any Tea Partiers in your life? Get them a copy of *Anarchy!* and bookmark Voltairine de Cleyre's 1908 essay, where she writes that America sees the Boston Tea Party as “the one sacrosanct mob in all history, to be revered but never on any account to be imitated”—perhaps they'll realize that they're anarchy's cousins. (“And then what?” I don't know. Nothing, probably.)

And like all of us, anarchists could cite a Thomas Jefferson quote or two to support their view. (“The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants.”) When the zombies finally take over America, I'm sure their leader will find a Jefferson quote that applies.

I'll close with a gift for sports haters:

“I am not a lover of sports and athletics, for these I consider a misuse of energy, which might do much to relieve the poor.” —Leo Tolstoy, one of *Mother Earth's* contributors. —Jim Woster (Counterpoint, 1919 Fifth St., Berkeley, CA 94710, counterpointpress.com)

Fly

By Ann Witherall, 254 pgs.

Fly is a semi-autobiographical story of a young punk rock girl from a small town who moves to the big city and carves out a life of her own. Believing in the power of punk rock, Annie and a friend begin squatting and search for members of their tribe. Each chapter brings a sense of dread, the threat of sexual assault, violence, and drug overdoses. Dispossession looms over Annie. I found myself shaking my head, remembering how young and naïve I was at fifteen, and how dangerous situations really were back then. I don't normally enjoy fictional books that reference band

Everything in the town seems wrong, everyone has a secret, and nobody is safe. In order to survive, Frank is going to have to out-freak everyone.

Most of the characters in *High on Blood* are sketchy and flawed without any redeemable qualities; however, they are caught in an engaging story that's difficult to put down. The writing and dialogue is incredibly strong and the imagery just jumps off the page. —Steve Hart (Kaplan Publishing)

Rich Boy Cries for Momma

By Ethan H. Minsker, 336 pgs.

Initially, I was drawn to this book due to a brief blurb I saw on a music blog. It basically stated that this was a book about a punk rocker growing up in DC in the 1980s. I didn't even need to see the picture on the back cover which flashes forwards to the author today, his Grey Matter and Marginal Man vinyl still at his side. But what you get with this memoir is so much more. Yes, punk colors the storyline from start to finish. The author expertly interweaves the lyrics with the story's progression. But this is not just a book about a kid going to hardCore shows. It begins in his pre-teen years and goes into college age activity. Learning disabilities, alienation, rejection, and love lost and gained are all described with heart and compassion. If the outside world thinks that bands like S.O.A. and Government Issue are violent, they should read this book before casting judgment. Punks may have their own world, but in the end they are just trying to make things better. Even if you didn't grow up in DC like I did, you will still enjoy how the scene and the different sections of the city are discussed by the author. But there's also a really incredible story here about searching for contentment in life. It will be worth it if you let this book open the door for you. Highly recommended. —Sean Koepenick (Minsker & Lee Productions, LLC, 126 East 12th Street, Suite 3C, New York, NY 10003, antagovision.com)

This Music: Pieces on Heavy Metal, Punk Rock, and Hardcore Punk

By Lewis Dimmick, 66 pgs.

In some ways this book might be a novella, in others a short story collection, yet it perhaps most resembles (to me) a perfect-bound, typeset, “personal zine.” *This Music* is a series of loosely chronological vignettes charting Lewis Dimmick's musical adolescence as a Staten Island teenager and young adult giving himself over the 1980s New York hardcore punk scene. Dimmick's prose is clear and succinct, with each piece usually making its point in a page or less. I'm partial to memoirish punk writing from this vantage point: someone wholly involved and devoted to a particular scene, yet not one of the big playmakers *per se*. For example: it's more interesting to me how Dimmick, as a relatively anonymous yet probably somewhat

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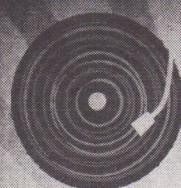
I am hearing a lot of Poison Idea,
The Accused, and Zeke. These are
some solid influences and we're not
talking blatant rip off stuff here either.
Its more like The Insurgence are
getting to a point where they can
stand alongside these giants and hold
their own. - Razorcake

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familiar face haunting CBGB throughout the '80s, perceived Roger Miret from the sidelines than anytime I've encountered Miret "on" Miret.

The Dionysian/Apollonian split in art makes for a necessary distance between punk music and punk writing—you can't verbally reconstruct an Agnostic Front riff, and there's no way to completely articulate the swelling of your soul that shuts down your brain and lets the music take over when you're watching, listening to, or playing it. But the minutiae of being an obsessive, fucked-up kid throwing yourself into the world of punk—recording the weekly punk radio show, hoping your mom vouches for your age at ABC No Rio when you're under sixteen, following Dave Insurgent down the street because you want a Reagan Youth shirt—is entirely valuable and a perfect complement to the force driving all of this—the music—as well as key to better understanding ourselves and our culture. Lewis Dimmick does this admirably, and I would have found much of value in this even if I wasn't immediately interested in anything about punk or NYHC.

His successes in communicating his experience, however, makes it all the more disappointing every time he sits on his generation's laurels and uses them as a way to dismiss an entire scene I'm guessing he knows close

to nothing about. Dimmick often employs the power of the bands he saw in the 1980s as a measuring stick for giving "current hardcore" a failing grade—hardcore he views as formulaic, sterile, devoid of originality and emotion. I can only assume he is writing about more commercially successful hardcore bands, which probably are the only ones he's been exposed to lately, than the dozens of bands that make up the current New York DIY hardcore scene, which, while imperfect, certainly holds up against any blowhardly dismissals from someone no longer "in it." But in and of itself, that is a small problem—if I, like Lewis three decades ago, could convince my parents to go with me to punk shows, then I can probably drag him out to see Cream or Dawn Of Humans sometime so he can start working on his official retraction. —Dave Brainwreck (wardancerecords.com)



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Bath Salt Zombies: DVD

Within the first few minutes of this no-budget horror flick, a guy gets fucked up on bath salts and gnaws the face off of a girl who just finished doing a striptease in front of him. This is essentially the movie asking, "Are you in or out?" If you're in, you've got more of the same in store. The scenes of intestine chewing and face gnawing are accompanied by a soundtrack of sleaze punk favorites: The Dwarves, The Meatmen, The Murder Junkies, and AntiSeen. Make no mistake, this is no-budget filmmaking, with all the crap that comes with it (shitty CGI blood sprays), as well as all the fun (highlight: a puppet dog that has been zombieified by bath salts ripping the necks out of drug dealers). The movie really hits its stride at the NYC subway finale, at which point it pretty much turns into a cartoon. This is what it looks like when filmmakers make the most of the resources at their disposal and put together a movie that emphasizes fun over everything else. —MP Johnson (MVD Visual, 203 Windsor Rd., Pottstown, PA, 19464, mvdvisual.com)

Damned, The: Live Live Live in London 2002 Tiki Nightmare: DVD

I consider The Damned a can't-miss live band. If they come anywhere near me, I'm going to see them. Even this many decades into their career, they put on a killer live show, as demonstrated on this DVD. They blast through all the hits, including my personal favorite, "Wait for the Blackout," as well as a handful of tunes from the new-at-the-time *Grave Disorder* album, which blend in well. Just to keep things weird, there's a break for Captain Sensible to sing his hit single, a cover of the show tune "Happy Time," originally from the musical *South Pacific*. There's a guy in a monkey suit playing drums, a goofy tiki-themed volcanic backdrop, and Hawaiian dancers. The sound is great and it's professionally shot. At the end, Captain Sensible wishes the crowd goodnight by saying, "I'm going up to the VIP bar to drink champagne. Hope you don't miss the last bus home." —MP Johnson (MVD Visual, 203 Windsor Rd., Pottstown, PA, 19464, mvdvisual.com)

Last Shop Standing:

The Rise, Fall and Rebirth of the Independent Record Shop: DVD

This short (fifty minutes) documentary looks at the history of independent record stores in the United Kingdom: from their rise in the 1950s with the birth of rock and roll, into the '60s and '70s as the genre progressed, and eventually as punk rock came along. The film looks at how things started to change for the worse in the 1990s and early 2000s and have now started to come around again. *Last Shop Standing* includes interviews with Johnny Marr, Billy Bragg, Paul Weller, Richard Hawley, and Sid Griffin, as well as a plethora of record store owners from all over the country.

The film is based on a book of the same title by Graham Jones, and he serves as the narrator and interviewer. The editing is very tight and smooth and while I'm not sure who did it, he or she should be commended for putting together a great example of how a documentary can be entertaining, educational, and efficient. With its editing and narration, as well as succinct length, *Last Shop Standing* would definitely be appropriate to air on PBS or the BBC.

Older record store owners served as historians and provided proper context to why and how record stores first grew and then started going out of business. Interspersed were the various musicians who shared their thoughts and experiences with record stores. The final act of the film looks at how record stores in the U.K. are being reborn. According to the film it's through diversifying their sales (selling musical instruments or other paraphernalia, concert tickets, incorporating with a coffee shop, etc.) and Record Store Day.

At seventy-four minutes, the extras included on the DVD are actually longer than the film. They include some outtakes and a continued look at the rebirth of record stores, as well as extended interviews with the musicians and talking heads in the film. I watched a few of these, but really don't care to see an eight or twelve minute interview with musicians I've never heard of talking about record stores. I couldn't even bother to watch Johnny Marr from The Smiths talk about record shops for twenty-five minutes. And I really like The Smiths. So, in that sense, perhaps the extras are best for those from the U.K. or those who are a big fan of U.K. artists.

My other complaint with the documentary is that some diversity amongst the interviewees would have been nice. While there were a few women and people of color, they served as just as handful amongst the many white men over the age of forty. It's hard not to come away from the film feeling that it is a complaint by primarily older white guys about how capitalism destroyed their club or hobby. As someone who used to work in a record store and spent a lot of my high school and college years hanging out in them, but who no longer does so, it would've been nice to hear from people under the age of forty as to why they *stopped* going to record shops. It was more than Napster and the major record labels being stupid.

The point is that a fuller picture could have been achieved in the recording of the film. While the interviewees serve the purpose of providing the historical aspect of the fall of the independent record shop in the U.K., they're probably not the only people (along with a couple of former record executives) who should have given an analysis of what went wrong. Providing a more complete picture of the fall and rebirth by those from the younger generation would have made this a stronger documentary. —Kurt Morris (lastshopstanding.com)

Troost: DVD

So, apparently, these guys were like, "Let's have a bunch of bands play our virtually pitch-black basement! We'll call it a fest and then we'll put out a live DVD! We'll film two camera angles: well-lit drummer and very-dimly-lit everything else! It'll rule!" And that's exactly what did. And I watched it. One song from each band, almost an hour's worth of material. Regardless of the fact that the bands seem to have run the gamut of various styles within punk, which is to be applauded, well, it all still sounds like a tinny basement show that's been put out on DVD. I'm going to be generous and file it under "Guess you had to be there." Apart from folks who were *in* the basement at the time and want to try and see if they can discern a friend, colleague, or bandmate in the dimness, I don't think there's any reason why someone else would ever need to watch this. Features Grizzly J. Berry, Harsh Reality, Meat Mist, Dark Ages, Nature Boys, Battle Royale, Sneaky Creeps, White Slave, Baitfish, Texas Instruments, Regret, The Informer, No Master, Sucked Dry, Boreas, and Attention Seeker. —Keith Rosson (XO Press, 3922 Harrison Kansas City, MO)

What Did You Expect?: The Archers Of Loaf Live at Cat's Cradle: DVD

I'm a big Archers fan and was really looking forward to viewing *What Did You Expect?* This ninety-minute DVD is primarily live material from the band's reunion shows recorded over two consecutive nights in 2011 at Cat's Cradle in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Although the band has since done tours together, this was their first time back on stage in over a decade.

The live performance is interspersed with interviews with band members, but they are brief, with topics including their atrocious band name and life on the road. It would have been interesting to hear more about the history of the band, what they had each been doing in the years between their break-up and reformation, and their thoughts on getting back together. Instead, we get talk about why they miss their old van. If the producers of the film weren't going to ask more than these uninteresting questions, it doesn't seem as though it's worth including the interview sections.

The interviews break up the main portion of the film, which is the

concert footage. Archers sound tight and bassist Matt Gentling definitely seems into it. He jumps and stomps around the stage and displays a lot of energy that matches the music. Although in an interview on the DVD he says a lot of it is nervous energy, it seems more like he's the only member of the band really excited to be there. Archers aren't a crazy punk band, but they do demand more of an expression of intensity than what the rest of the band seemed capable of. That's not to say the members looked bored, but let's just say it makes sense that the majority of the time the camera was focused on Gentling or at least his side of the stage. Otherwise you'd have ninety minutes of guys just standing (or sitting, in the case of the drummer) and playing catchy, and occasionally emotionally charged, indie rock songs on their instruments.

All of this goes back to my view that if you play punk or any variation of it, you should have energy and put on some sort of "performance" for your audience. That's not to say you have to dress up in costumes and create a set, but standing up on stage and playing the songs in the exact same way as they're heard on the album and barely talking to the crowd in between songs seems to be one of the worst things a band could do. Unfortunately, on *What Did You Expect?* Archers Of Loaf tend to do way more of the latter and nothing even close to the former.

I found it way more interesting to watch the fans in the front row, especially the girl who in her jumping I thought would jump out of her tank top, or the indie rock guy who was up front but could seem to care less about being there. All of that being said, it makes it hard to understand how the director could say, "...I truly believe [this] is one of the most exciting concert films of all time," besides the fact that he obviously believes in what he does and wants to sell copies of the DVD.

I still love the Archers Of Loaf and will listen to them regularly, but now know that should they go on tour and come to my city, I certainly have no reason to go see them. That's not just because I've seen them live on DVD, but because they don't seem to put on much of a live show. —Kurt Morris (whatdidyouexpectmovie.com)



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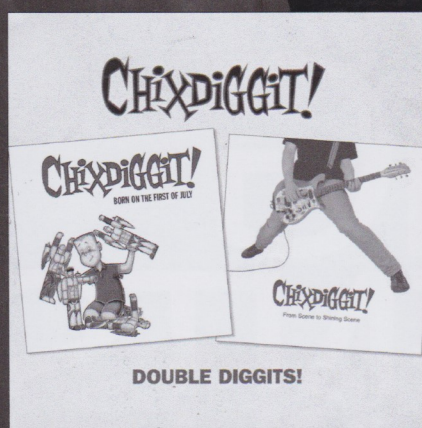


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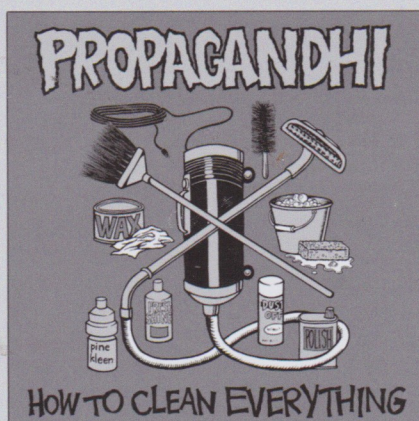




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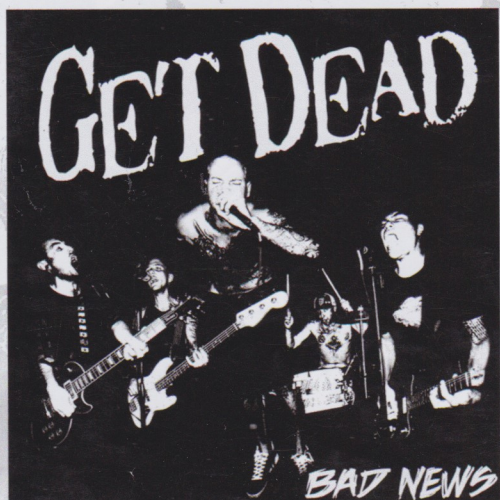
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